

**Testimony of Pam Peck, Policy and Compliance Program Director
On Senate Bill 582
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
April 8, 2021**



Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee:

Metro continues to support SB 582, including the -9 amendment. In our previous testimony, we emphasized the urgency of acting now, and we reiterate that today. Oregon's recycling system needs an overhaul, including significant new investments to ensure our system supports responsible recycling; helps us reduce waste and use fewer resources; advances equity; and protects human health and the environment.

Our recycling system's problems begin with customer confusion about what can be recycled, which leads to more contamination in the bin. We find ourselves faced with increasing costs and struggling to equitably provide needed services, especially to multi-family households. An updated recycling system would be both more responsible and more equitable:

- Packaging, especially plastics, would have less environmental impact.
- Less of Oregon's plastic trash would pollute oceans and communities near and far.
- Recycling would be easy and convenient everywhere for everyone, whether you live in a house or an apartment, in a city or outside of one.
- Workers – like those who sort recyclable materials – would have safe working conditions and living wages.
- Bringing producers into the system would create an incentive for less wasteful packaging and provide resources to build a system that works for everyone.

Metro participated actively in the work of the statewide Recycling Steering Committee that developed the concept embodied in SB 582-1. We have continued to collaborate with RSC members to ensure that the new amendment remains faithful to the recommendations of the RSC. One important element of that recommendation was to leave the existing roles and authority of local governments within the recycling system unchanged. We believe the amendment you are considering carries out that intent.

Recycling helps us reduce waste, use fewer resources and protect the environment for future generations. But Oregon's recycling system was created decades ago – it wasn't built for what we put in the bin today. It needs an overhaul.

SB 582 with the -9 amendment gives the Legislature an opportunity to take action now. We strongly urge your support.