

Local Governments Support the Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act (SB 582-9)



Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee:

The local governments and governmental associations listed above continue to strongly support the passage this session of comprehensive legislation to address plastic pollution and modernize Oregon's recycling system.

Action is urgently needed to address changes in materials and markets that have created significant challenges to the sustainable and equitable operation of recycling programs across Oregon. The current system confuses consumers about what they can recycle, creates problems at recycling facilities when non-recyclable materials are put in the bin, and generates concerns among the public that what we put in the bin ends up polluting developing countries.

Local governments find themselves in the thick of these challenges. Diminishing markets and higher quality standards for recyclables have pushed up costs for our ratepayers. Educating residents about what can go in the bin and addressing their concerns about our supposedly recycled plastics polluting other countries demands our constant attention. Meanwhile, we urgently need to increase equity in the system by providing greater access to recycling services for rural and multifamily residents and ensuring living wages for recycling workers.

SB 582 addresses these challenges by fundamentally restructuring our recycling system. It will:

- **Require producers to take responsibility for the products and packaging they put onto the market.** Producers, who have the greatest ability to make changes that can make their products easier to manage, need to step up to responsibilities that local governments have too long borne on their own. The bill will require producers to provide resources to assist local governments in improving services, including expanding multifamily recycling.
- **Ensure an equitable recycling system.** Recycling workers will receive a living wage. Collected materials will not be allowed to pollute other communities – domestic or foreign.

- **Modernize the recycling system statewide.** Establish a statewide list of what will be collected for recycling based on a thorough evaluation of economic and environmental benefits. Require payments from producers to level the cost of getting recycling materials to markets.

As you know, SB 582 and the proposed -9 amendment are the product of more than two years of research and stakeholder engagement, as well as intensive discussions on amendments over the past several months. Local governments have been directly involved in these efforts. We are committed to continuing to work with you to carry out the intent of the partners who joined to develop this proposal.

We strongly support SB 582 and urge you to move it forward.