

Thank you, Mr./Ms. Chair, and good morning to the Committee Members. My name is Phil Harding, and I am the Director of Technology and Sustainability at Willamette Falls Paper Company. I am also a carbon pricing activist at the federal level. I have a PhD in chemical engineering and am a registered Professional Engineer.

The original Oregon bag ban bill is a success and a great step forward in sustainability and using market forces to spur recycling. It unwittingly excluded an opportunity to include other organic, sustainable, and recyclable fiber options for making paper. Specifically, non-wood fibers. Broadening the scope of fiber options to include both post-consumer waste and non-wood fibers will demonstrate leadership by the State of Oregon, protect our forests, spur innovation and investment, create jobs, and support farmers. As an example, the papermaking fiber created by Columbia Pulp (Dayton, WA) converts agricultural waste from wheat straw to fiber and therefore reduces dependence on tree-based fiber. It also eliminates annual burning of 100,000 acres and has 50 percent lower carbon footprint than conventional fiber. It uses 75 percent less water and 30 percent less energy per ton of fiber than conventional fiber production. It issues no effluent to a river, generates biopolymer and compost byproducts, and has no solid waste. The potential eventual volume of non-wood fiber is a tiny fraction of the total volume of post-consumer recycled paper and only enhances the bag ban bill effect. Future options in hemp, bagasse, and bamboo (as examples) will never compete with paper recycling. Help the environment. Help regional farmers. Help spur innovation and investment. Please pass this bill. Thank you.