



To: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
From: Paige Spence, Washington County Government Relations Manager
Date: February 23, 2021
Re: Support for SB 582-1

Dear Chair Dembrow and Committee Members:

Thank you for hearing SB 582-1, the result of several years of collaboration across the recycling system, rigorous research, community outreach, and negotiations. It is a solid, well thought out approach that was crafted specifically to meet Oregon's needs. Specifically, SB 582-1 will make Oregon's recycling system easier to use, more accessible to people across the state, more equitable in how it distributes benefits and burdens, and ensures that what we collect for recycling is recycled in a responsible way. SB 582-1 addresses urgent problems including increasing costs for recycling that our community members have had to pay, mounting plastics pollution, and inequities for both users and workers in the system.

Bringing producers into the system will provide the necessary resources to build a responsible recycling system that works for everyone and creates incentives for producers to use less wasteful packaging. Importantly, SB 582-1 will provide assurance that materials collected in Oregon are actually responsibly recycled. As a local government managing solid waste and recycling, it is our fundamental responsibility to ensure that materials we collect are recycled in a way that creates environmental benefits and prevents negative social impacts. Bringing producers into the recycling system would provide the resources necessary to create a responsible recycling system that works for everyone and protects the environment without putting further financial burden on rate payers.

Another important component of this compromise legislation is that it embodies a system of shared responsibility: Ratepayers will continue to pay the costs for recycling collection but will be protected from rate increases as a result of these improvements. Producers generally will pay for everything else that is needed to modernize recycling – statewide education materials and feedback programs, transportation of materials from rural communities, collection upgrades for people who live in apartments, living wages for workers in the sorting facilities, removing unwanted items from the materials sent to market, and for special collection for material that is harder to collect curbside.

Thank you for considering this bill and Washington County's testimony.

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