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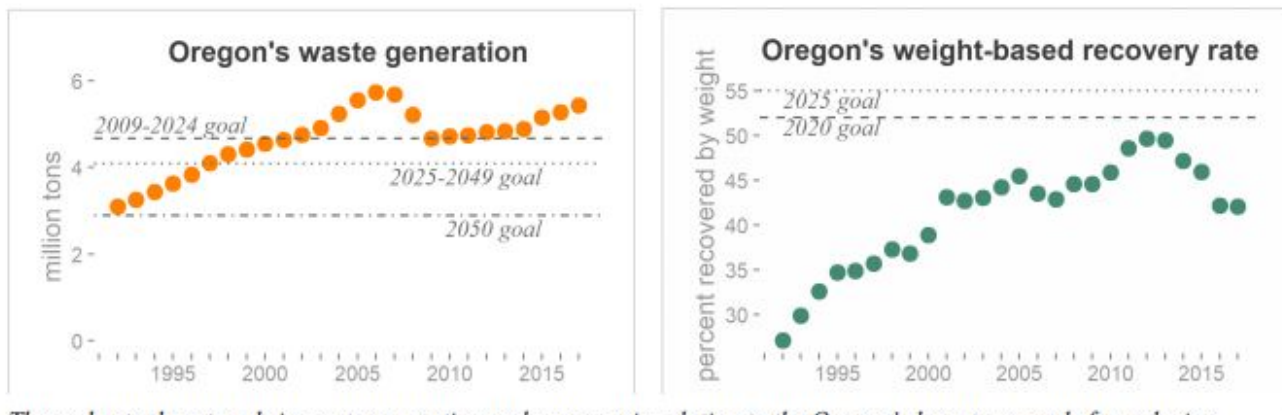
2/23/2021

Chair Dembrow and members of the committee,

My name is Sal Peralta. I am testifying today on behalf of Zero Waste Oregon, a public-interest coalition of organizations dedicated to reducing waste going to Oregon landfills, including the Independent Party of Oregon, Oregon Progressive Party and Oregon Community Rights Network.

Our coalition supports policies that require manufacturers to account for environmental costs associated with the manufacturing of goods sold in Oregon. We support the efforts to modernize and strengthen Oregon's recycling system to bring Oregon's solid waste system into compliance with waste reduction policies that have already been established by this legislature.

A primary reason our coalition was formed is that Oregon has generally failed to achieve the waste reduction goals established by this legislature. The charts below show Oregon's waste reduction goals and recovery rate. Waste generation is at an all-time high and trending up. Recovery as a percentage of materials received is worse than 20 years ago.



These charts show trends in waste generation and recovery in relation to the Oregon's long-term goals for reducing generation and increasing recovery (Oregon Revised Statute 459A.010).

While this has largely been attributed to the Chinese National Sword in 2019, the reality is that most of the data we have predates that occurrence.

- **Oregon’s problem with recycling and waste reduction predates the 2018 disruption in international recycling markets.**

The state’s recycling levels in 2017, prior to the dropoff in international recycling, were lower than they were in 2001.

This drop in recycling is largely due to a loss of domestic recycling capacity, especially for pulp and paper materials.

Oregon State Recovered Tons and Recovery Rates

Year	Tons Recovered	Tons Disposed	Calculated Rate ¹
1992	839,679	2,263,099	27.1
1993	974,685	2,280,513	29.9
1994	1,118,912	2,312,669	32.6
1995	1,257,204	2,362,146	34.7
1996	1,338,259	2,497,170	34.9
1997	1,462,114	2,633,017	35.7
1998	1,604,985	2,695,903	37.3
1999	1,626,271	2,788,699	36.8
2000	1,765,817	2,778,463	38.9
2001	1,999,085	2,635,072	43.1
2002	2,029,261	2,723,365	42.7
2003	2,116,880	2,796,787	43.1
2004	2,317,064	2,923,462	44.2
2005	2,523,367	3,026,457	45.5
2006	2,494,050	3,235,828	43.5
2007	2,437,569	3,248,126	42.9
2008	2,326,146	2,890,503	44.6
2009	2,082,631	2,586,721	44.6
2010	2,163,957	2,523,808	46.2
2011	2,306,124	2,437,767	48.6
2012	2,391,490	2,424,833	49.7
2013	2,390,859 ²	2,513,404 ²	48.8 ¹
2014	2,307,269 ²	2,634,653 ²	46.7 ¹
2015	2,369,080 ²	2,784,467 ²	46.0 ¹
2016	2,225,943 ²	3,050,432	42.2 ¹
2017	2,327,428 ²	3,207,448 ²	42.1 ¹

¹ These tonnage figures are corrected from earlier published values.

We provide this information primarily as context as you consider these environmental policies. It is not enough to set a strong standard, it is critical that agencies be held accountable for hitting those goals, so we appreciate your committee hearing these important bills today.

You have three solid waste bills under consideration by this committee today. I would like to briefly address the first two:

- **SB 581** - Bans the use of the current deceptive chasing arrow symbol in Oregon. We encourage Oregon to adopt a strong policy in this area, but note that the main general provisions of SB 581 are contained in SB 582(a). Either version adopted should contain a provision that causes the policy to take effect when other states adopt a similar policy. Otherwise, it will likely not be enforceable (think of how the National Popular Vote Compact works).
- **SB 14** - This is a good idea. Companies selling plasticware should be accountable for the costs associated with their disposal, given the secondary environmental costs. This proposal seeks to directly accomplish that goal.

SB 582a is the product of a year-long process by DEQ to modernize Oregon’s recycling system.

As that process began, those who founded our organization were deeply concerned that DEQ’s funding model, which is based on tipping fees to Oregon landfills, was precluding it from meeting its regulatory mission, since any significant reduction in solid waste materials to landfills would reduce the agency’s funding.

⁴<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/FilterDocs/2017mrwgrates.pdf>

When the agency put together a substantial effort to engage the recycling industry, haulers and local governments, it is fair to say that we were deeply skeptical of the process.

There was no public representation for environmental groups, except those with clear financial ties to corporate single-use disposable product brands. There was no representation for communities that are significantly affected by landfills. Every representative of the committee reflected either a corporate interest or a government agency from a non-landfill community.

However, in the past year, we have seen a substantial good-faith effort on the agency's part, and on the part of Oregon's recycling and solid waste industries and local governments to develop a comprehensive framework to help modernize recycling in Oregon.

We support the broad framework established in this policy. There are a few broad provisions we would like to call attention to:

- This will hold manufacturers of single-use packaging more accountable for the externalities associated with those products.
- This will strengthen DEQ's ability to license and enforce operations at Oregon recycling facilities.
- Eco-modulation should discourage packaging with more significant negative externalities. However, there is significant legitimate concern among the environmental community, that this framework will use criteria that holds plastics manufacturers less accountable for secondary costs than more traditional forms of packaging.

We look forward to engaging with you and your individual staff members on these important issues as your committee begins to hear from various stakeholders. However, we urge passage of this framework with minimal amendment, as substantial work has gone into this legislation to build consensus among a broad swath of interested Oregonians..

Respectfully,

Sal Peralta
Policy Director, Zero Waste Oregon