



Zero Waste McMinnville

We're Helping McMinnville Sort it Out!

Re: House Bill 543 – Ban on single use polystyrene.

Madam Chair and members of the Committee.

Thank you for allowing us to weigh in on this vital legislation. I represent Zero Waste McMinnville, a nonprofit dedicated to making McMinnville a Zero Waste city. Through education, practice, and policy, we advocate for the diversion of all materials that otherwise might end up in landfills and incinerators. Of particular concern is plastic, including polystyrene.

Styrofoam use has long been an issue our organization has worked to eliminate from the waste stream. McMinnville is the only city in Oregon where a polystyrene franchise recycling option is available. The cost is included in the residential garbage bills of our citizens, who may bring their clean styrofoam to the transfer station for collection without being charged at the gate. As a result, styrofoam is not collected at the curb. The styrofoam is then transferred by truck to Agilyx in Tigard, Oregon, where it is broken down into the ingredients to make more styrofoam.

We bring the McMinnville model up to call attention to the fact that McMinnville is way ahead of the rest of the State concerning polystyrene recycling. Yet, most of the polystyrene in our waste shed is **STILL THROWN AWAY**. We point out that even though we have the most advanced polystyrene recycling in the State, single-use styrofoam used in our waste stream is often soiled by food and thus not eligible for recycling. It is considered... "Contaminated" and is thrown away or still ending up on our roadways, in our waterways, and in our agricultural fields. Although we are grateful for this Agilyx service which begins to address the problem of styrofoam in our community, the only real solution is to remove polystyrene from the waste stream all together.

Oregon would not be revolutionary if it were to ban the use of single-use foam takeout for prepared food. Whole nations and US states have prohibited food vendors from using polystyrene foam containers to sell prepared food. The transition to a circular economy where products are removed from the waste stream and transitioned to genuinely compostable materials, have happened without any measurable detriment to the commerce of takeout prepared food.

The definition of Zero Waste is diverting 90% of the waste stream from landfills and incinerators. Polystyrene is not an essential product to the takeout market and, thus, should be removed from the waste stream to achieve our goal of making McMinnville a Zero Waste city.

Please take the steps necessary to remove polystyrene food containers from the waste shed altogether, by passing HB-523.

Thank you for considering this written testimony when debating this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Ramsey McPhillips

Ramsey McPhillips
President
Zero Waste McMinnville
PO Box 1313
McMinnville, OR 97128 www.zerowastemcminnville.com