



Office of the Mayor
501 SW Madison Avenue
PO Box 1083
Corvallis, OR 97339-1083
(541) 766-6901
FAX: (541) 766-6946
Mayor@corvallisoregon.gov

March 20, 2023

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Oregon State Senate
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, and Committee Members Golden, Hayden, and Lieber:

The Corvallis City Council supports Senate Bill 543.

When the legislature passed the state wide ban on single use plastic bags, it simplified regulations across the state, provided needed clarity, and reduced our consumption of single use plastics. It was a proud night on the Corvallis City Council when we were able to repeal our local bag ban because the legislature had moved to a state wide policy. SB 543 is the next logical step to reducing single use plastics. Senate Bill 543 would ban polystyrene foodware, coolers, and packing peanuts, as well as phasing out PFAS, a toxic "forever chemical," from food packaging, which has been linked to thyroid, kidney, and ovarian cancers, by January 2025.

The bill is essential because Polystyrene foam is one of the most wasteful single-use plastics. It is typically not reused, is not accepted in curbside recycling, and so is one of the top items found polluting Oregon's beaches. According to the Sustainable Business Toolkit, about 25 billion Styrofoam cups are thrown away each year, cups that are not biodegradable thus do not decompose in landfills; animals often mistake broken down Styrofoam for food and ingest this toxic chemical, causing harm or death; the chemicals benzene and styrene used to make Styrofoam are carcinogens, thus promoting cancer; and Perfluoroalkyl chemicals are the "forever chemicals" whose impacts we are just beginning to see and to regulate. Given the range of environmental and health impacts of these products, we must begin to regulate their production and use.

In response to these environmental and health concerns, Maine was the first state to ban Styrofoam, followed by Connecticut, New York, Colorado, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and New Jersey. It is time for Oregon to do the same.

We wish to join with the Newport City Council in acknowledging the impact our choices have on our local beaches and marine life, which we all enjoy on a regular basis, as well as our greater health and well being. Please support Senate Bill 543 for a cleaner, healthier Oregon.

Sincerely,

Charles Maughan
Mayor