

Submitter: Olivia Heffernan

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure: SB543

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, and members of the committee, my name is Olivia Heffernan and I am a first year student at the University of Oregon and a volunteer with OSPIRG students. OSPIRG Students is a statewide student-run, student-funded, nonprofit working towards a greener, healthier, more meaningful future. This year our Beyond Plastics campaign is our lead campaign, educating students at the University of Oregon on the importance of breaking free from single use plastics. Our society is built around single use plastics that we're encouraged to rapidly make, use, and throw away and one of the absolute worst offenders of this is polystyrene, foam takeout cups and containers, of which 70 million foam cups get disposed of a day in the US.

Being from New York state, I am very familiar with excess litter and trash in my surroundings. One of the main reasons that I chose to move to Oregon was the beautiful, idyllic nature that the state takes such pride in. Imagine my disappointment when I saw that my college campus, full of plastic, was one of the cleanest places that I had visited. Venturing across the state in an effort to feel more at home has made me brutally aware of how polluted the environment is. I want to love my new home. There is no reason that the streets of Oregon should contain the same trash that the streets of the most populated metropolis in the United States are known for. Reducing plastic pollution is important to Oregon's young people. We hope that the Oregon legislature finally passes a ban on polystyrene foam takeout containers and cups this session and takes other actions to help move our state beyond plastic.