



February 12, 2025

Senator Janeen Sollman
Chair, Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

Re: SB 551 Beyond the Bag Ban (Support)

Chair Sollman and Honorable Members of the Senate

On behalf of Oregon chapter network, our greater membership and thousands of Oregon supporters and volunteers, the Surfrider Foundation would like to express our strong support for SB 551 - a bill to help curb our consumption and waste of single use plastics. We know very well the negative impacts of single use plastics in our environment, waterways and oceans. SB 551 addresses some simple behavior changes across retail, restaurants and the lodging industry where some of the most ubiquitous and wasteful consumerism of single-use plastics occurs. At the business level within the restaurant and lodging industry, we know these changes only stand to save businesses both money and cut waste. Working beyond the bag ban through policies that help evolve our, often unnecessary, consumer behaviors is an easy and cost-effective opportunity to reduce single use plastics in Oregon.

Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots, non-profit environmental organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our worlds ocean, waves and beaches. Our Oregon chapter network comprises thousands of supporters and volunteers throughout the state organized among our 5 distinct coastal chapters in Oregon. Our plastic pollution initiative includes extensive ongoing coastal beach cleanups, local policy advocacy, partnerships with researchers and business-forward programs to reduce plastic waste such as our Ocean Friendly Restaurant and Lodging Programs. It is through these efforts our volunteers and Oregon network of chapters and members are working in your local communities in Oregon on single use plastic pollution from the cleanup level to the consumer and business prevention level. We have learned through this deep community organizing and programmatic work with the restaurant and lodging industry that these efforts make good business sense, are what consumers want and stand to save these industries money.

As coastal residents, we live adjacent to one of our state's most valuable economic and ecological resources, the beach and ocean. We live on this rural edge and witness the degradation of our marine life and beaches and experience this problem much differently than those in inland communities. This time of year we call "plastic debris season" due to the massive volumes of single-use plastics and foam that washes ashore with large storms and tide events. It requires what we call "rapid response cleanups" where volunteers mobilize overnight to tackle large swaths of beach areas that are completely inundated with plastic. Can you imagine having a debris season wash over your child's ball field, your local park or school playground so thick you couldn't see the ground beneath your feet? For

coastal residents, this is the plastic reality of our beach winter season. Attached is a photo to give you a better idea of what we're talking about from Otter Rock Marine Reserve at Devil's Punchbowl State Park last winter – even these special parks and protected areas are not immune to downstream effects of plastic pollution.

As more and more of our policy interests faces the production end of plastics, we continue to chip away at consumer and business opportunities that make good sense. SB 551 is one of those policies that takes some simple direction at the business level that is a win-win for businesses and the environment. We encourage your yes on SB 551.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlie Plybon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent loop at the end of the name.

Charlie Plybon
Oregon Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation
cplybon@surfrider.org
541-961-8143

