



Feb. 12, 2025

**TO:** Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

**FR:** Derek Sangston, Oregon Business & Industry

**RE:** Opposition to SB 526

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Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment. For the record, I am Derek Sangston, policy director and counsel for Oregon Business & Industry (OBI).

OBI is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon's 36 counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. Our 1,600 member companies, more than 80% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians. Oregon's private sector businesses help drive a healthy, prosperous economy for the benefit of everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 526. OBI opposes SB 526 because its provisions – requiring clothes washers sold in Oregon starting in 2030 to either come equipped or otherwise include microfiber filters – would make Oregon an outlier nationwide. Ultimately, the bill would result in fewer washers sold in state, high prices for those that are and extreme burdens on Oregonians.

No other state requires microfiber filters on new clothes washers. As a result, the market for clothes washers that come equipped with microfiber filters is nonexistent. Making those the default clothes washers in this state will place a significant burden on businesses selling clothes washers into Oregon and is currently impractical. Oregon simply is not a big enough market to spur economy-wide changes to a products like clothes washers. Instead, SB 526 would ultimately reduce the number of clothes washers that are sold in Oregon.

Microfiber filters are available as a secondary purchase. However, requiring such filters would create additional cost that likely would be passed to consumers and unnecessary risk for homeowners. Since the supply chains on which Oregon relies are national, not local, requiring clothes washers to be packaged with an uninstalled filter would add even more complication in distribution, sale and – of course – consumer cost. SB 526 additionally acknowledges these filters can cause severe damage to clothes and washing machines, as it would require special labeling provisions informing consumers of special maintenance requirements to mitigate such damage.

While the California legislature passed a similar bill in 2023, Gov. Newsom vetoed the bill citing the increased costs that bill would have placed on consumers. In his veto letter, Gov. Newsom encouraged the legislature to incentivize microfiber filters, or other technologies that remove

microfibers from wastewater, rather than mandate them. Oregon's retailers would ask the legislature to consider similar incentives for consumers in Oregon.

For those reasons, OBI respectfully requests this committee to reject SB 526. Thank you for your consideration.

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