

**DEB PATTERSON
STATE SENATOR/SENADORA ESTATAL
DISTRICT 10/DISTRITO 10**



OREGON STATE SENATE/SENADO DEL ESTADO DE OREGON

12 February 2025

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Deb Patterson, and I am the State Senator for District 10, representing South and West Salem, Monmouth, and Independence. I am here today to urge your support for Senate Bill 526, a critical step in addressing the alarming rise of microplastic pollution in our waterways, food, and even our bodies.

Microplastics, specifically microfibers, have been found virtually everywhere scientists have looked—from the ocean's depths to the peaks of mountains, and, disturbingly, in human lungs and placentas. A 2021 study of Oregon's rivers found microfibers at 100% of tested sites. One of the largest sources of these microplastics is the shedding of synthetic textiles, particularly through washing machines. A single load of laundry can release up to 18 million microfibers into wastewater, where they can pass through treatment systems and enter our environment and food chain.

The health risks of microplastics remain an urgent area of study, but emerging research suggests troubling concerns. Microfibers have been found to leach toxic chemicals and transport pollutants, raising potential risks for human exposure through water, food, and air. Given the uncertainty surrounding their long-term effects on human health, it is imperative that we act now to limit their spread.

SB 526 provides a straightforward, cost-effective solution: requiring new washing machines sold in Oregon to include microfiber filtration systems. Studies have shown that existing microfiber filters can reduce microfiber pollution by up to 90%, and the cost increase for consumers is estimated at just \$14 to \$20 per machine—a small price to pay for the long-term health of our communities and ecosystems.

Oregon has an opportunity to lead the way in tackling microfiber pollution by taking this simple but impactful step. I urge you to support SB 526 to protect our environment, food supply, and public health from the growing threat of microplastics. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Deb Patterson'.

Deb Patterson