



# Oregon

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**DATE:** February 17, 2025  
**TO:** House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment  
**FROM:** Abby Boudouris, Legislative Analyst  
**SUBJECT:** HB 3018 of 2025 Session

DEQ has no position on HB 3018 and is submitting this testimony to highlight the alignment between food waste prevention and composting and DEQ's *2050 Vision of Materials Management in Oregon and Framework for Action*. The 2050 Vision envisions an Oregon in 2050 where people produce and use materials responsibly—conserving resources, protecting the environment and living well. One of the goals is for materials to have the most useful life possible before and after discard. Ensuring that food in Oregon is consumed or composted, not wasted or put into landfill, will protect our environment, mitigate methane and other environmentally harmful GHGs, and support more sustainable and resilient food systems.

Globally, food production accounts for approximately 25% of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions (Ritchie and Roser 2024). 30-40% of the food that is produced in the US goes to waste each year (USDA Economic Research Service).

This bill requires commercial food waste generators of a certain size to separate their food waste from the garbage and arrange for it to be collected and transported to a composting facility for processing. While preventing food waste from occurring in the first place is important, there will always be a need for end-of-life food waste management for inedible food products (i.e., peels, shells, and bones). Processing food waste through composting or anaerobic digestion is preferred above sending food waste to landfill or incineration (USDA's Wasted Food Scale). Additionally, when food is composted, it produces a nutrient-rich product that can be re-applied to agricultural land, creating a nutrient cycle and using food to its highest and best use. The EPA estimates that there is an opportunity to reduce landfill methane emissions by 33% if food waste is used more productively instead.

The Food Labeling section of HB 3018 says that producers of food products that are required or elect to use date labels, must use one of two labels. The two options for date labels as specified in HB 3018 are 'best if used by' to indicate the peak freshness and quality of a product and 'use by' date to indicate the safety date. Currently, there is not a standard for food date labels in Oregon so consumers see a variety of different formats and may not understand the information and implication of the language; These labels may include: 'sell by', 'enjoy by', 'expires on', 'made on', and others.

In Oregon, ~60% of all non-farm food waste occurs at the household level, i.e., after food is purchased and brought home for consumption. This is due to a variety of reasons including consumer confusion over date labels and what they mean. DEQ's Oregon Wasted Food Study estimates that of all food waste thrown away by household, 71% could have been eaten (i.e. it was not bones, shells, peels, etc). The reduction of consumer food waste has high potential to prevent food waste from occurring, which will reduce the associated GHG emissions.

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