

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 680
February 26, 2025

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

With the world now facing the devastating consequences of the climate crisis, Oregonians are increasingly making decisions about which products to purchase based on perceived sustainability. Deceptive environmental marketing claims, commonly known as “greenwashing,” threaten consumers’ rights and protections and undermine Oregonians’ ability to make informed purchasing decisions. Senate Bill 680 will help provide Oregonians with accurate information, promote fairness in the marketplace, and ensure that bad actors are held accountable when they deceive and mislead consumers.

Senate Bill 680 amends the Unlawful Trade Practices Act (UTPA) to prohibit environmental marketing claims, “net zero” claims, or reputational advertisements that are materially false, misleading, deceptive, or fraudulent. It is enforceable by the attorney general and private citizens. This legislation is a necessary response to a surge of corporate greenwashing nationwide, which is likely being promoted to a significant number of Oregonians. For example:

- DWS Group misstated the size of its Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) oriented assets, leading to enforcement and penalties from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).
- Kohl’s and Walmart marketed products as bamboo-derived, when in fact they were made from Rayon, leading to enforcement and penalties from the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC).
- Keurig misled the public about K-Cup pod recycling, leading to SEC enforcement.

While these are examples of greenwashing that were addressed by the federal government, we cannot expect that the same enforcement will now take place given staffing cuts and changing priorities at those federal bodies. Examples of potential national-level greenwashing taking place right now include:

- Tyson Foods is being [sued](#) in the District of Columbia for allegedly misleading consumers with net zero emissions claims that are not backed up by meaningful plans.
- Shell continues to [tout](#) its progress towards Net Zero by referencing benchmarks of its own making, likely misleading consumers about the true scope of progress.
- Crest is under scrutiny for its [“Recycle Ready”](#) slogan on toothpaste tubes.

State attorneys general and private organizations have used strong consumer protection statutes to expose and remedy greenwashing. For example, [Minnesota’s Attorney General settled a case against Walmart and Reynolds Consumer Products](#) over false marketing of Hefty-brand plastic bags as recyclable, resulting in civil penalties and requiring anti-greenwashing training for employees.

Thank you for considering my testimony and I urge a YES vote on Senate Bill 680.

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