

Chair Lively and committee members, my name is John Deuel, and I reside in Benton County. I am here to support House Bill 3794 and recommend that you advance it. I am representing only myself in sharing this testimony.

Over the past 34 years, I have managed waste prevention and recycling programs and services in Virginia and Oregon. I am grateful to Oregon for leading the way on many groundbreaking laws that have resulted in higher levels of materials diversion, including the Bottle Bill and, more recently, the Recycling Modernization Act. Oregon's bottle bill is a national model for driving higher beverage container recovery and litter prevention. The soon-to-be-launched RMA is poised to address longstanding recycling issues in multiple ways.

While less contamination and higher levels of recycling are important to managing materials sustainably, recycling alone will not be enough to extend the life of landfills or reach Oregon's greenhouse gas reduction goals. Why? The extraction of resources, manufacturing, and transporting of products "upstream" generates a significantly higher amount of greenhouse gases.

Thankfully, DEQ has a sustainable materials management framework, and Benton County is following the State's lead. The current work of the Regional Sustainable Materials Management Plan Task Force has much promise toward achieving significant outcomes. By the end of June, this group of citizens, government leaders, agency staff, and knowledgeable materials management consultants will release their recommendations. These discussions and strategizing have focused on regional solutions for solid waste management in Western Oregon and new initiatives to prevent, reduce, and reuse materials now wasted in the built environment, our food systems, and products and packaging.

There is a great sense of urgency to this work. Waste generation and recovery rates have been flat, and the population continues to rise. The standard end-of-life disposal-based solutions are only a band-aid. With the passage of HB 3794, Oregon can establish more sustainable materials management practices and escalate the planning to a higher level for maximum results.

We have all seen plans with potential and excitement presented, then sit on shelves. By building upon the work of this Task Force, these recommendations will receive the leadership, planning, and coordination that will lead to the results Oregon needs for managing materials sustainably.

