

County Commissioners
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MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

February 3, 2026

House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Marion County Supports HB 4144

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Levy, and Members of the Committee:

The Marion County Board of Commissioners writes in strong support of HB 4144, legislation to establish a safe, statewide battery collection and recycling program through an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework.

HB 4144 is urgently needed to address the growing number of battery-caused fires occurring in garbage trucks, transfer stations, recycling facilities, and landfills, fires that endanger workers, threaten public and private infrastructure, and increase costs for local governments and ratepayers. As batteries become more common in everyday consumer products, including electronics, cordless tools, and e-bikes and scooters, Oregon's waste stream is seeing a sharp rise in both single-use and rechargeable batteries improperly disposed in trash and recycling bins.

It is estimated that over 1.4 million pounds of single-use and rechargeable batteries are disposed in Oregon each year, and this number is expected to rise significantly. These batteries contain materials that are hazardous when damaged, crushed, or exposed to heat, and lithium batteries in particular can ignite easily, causing fast-moving fires that are difficult to extinguish and extremely dangerous to workers responding on-scene.

HB 4144 addresses this risk by creating a comprehensive battery EPR program that will:

- Require battery manufacturers to manage and pay for the collection, transportation, and responsible recycling of covered batteries;
- Establish convenient and accessible collection sites statewide, including performance standards to ensure that 95% of residents live within 15 miles of a collection site, and at least one collection site serves communities with 4,000+ residents;
- Increase recovery of critical raw materials, improving recycling and resource recovery;
- Reduce environmental harm caused by battery fires and toxic leakage; and
- Prohibit lithium batteries from being disposed of in the trash, reducing the likelihood they enter the waste stream in the first place.

Importantly, HB 4144 is also general fund revenue neutral. Like other EPR programs in Oregon, the program is fully funded by producers, not local taxpayers or ratepayers. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) may utilize existing funds to begin implementation, and those costs are reimbursed once producer fees are collected and the program is operational.

Oregon does not need to invent a new model from scratch. Battery EPR is a proven policy solution and is gaining national momentum. Colorado and Nebraska passed similar legislation in 2025, and numerous other states have enacted or are actively considering policies to reduce battery fire risks. Oregon should be a leader in protecting workers, strengthening infrastructure resiliency, and modernizing waste management practices statewide.

Finally, Marion County appreciates that HB 4144 reflects extensive stakeholder collaboration involving Oregon's solid waste industry, local governments, and national battery producers. This bill represents a practical, unified approach to solving a growing public safety hazard.

For these reasons, the Marion County Board of Commissioners urges the committee to pass HB 4144.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued work to protect Oregon communities.

Sincerely,



Colm Willis
Chair



Kevin Cameron
Commissioner



Danielle Bethell
Commissioner