

Feb 5, 2025

TO: House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
FR: Brenna Stevens, Zero Waste Advocate, Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG)
RE: HB 4144 - Support

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

I am writing on behalf of OSPIRG to urge your support of HB 4144 to help reduce battery waste and encourage reuse and recycling. OSPIRG is a statewide member-based organization representing thousands of Oregonians across the state. We stand up for the public on issues that impact their health, safety, and wellbeing.

As more and more of the products in our lives get equipped with batteries and electronics, our waste facilities struggle to safely dispose of this waste. Moreover, when materials like batteries are discarded, they create pollution and require producers to extract more natural resources to make new materials.

This waste is by design. As long as individuals, governments, our environment and future generations – not producers – bear the costs of our throwaway society, those who design and make the products we buy have no incentive to change.

Holding producers responsible for the waste they create can incentivize a shift to a circular economy – one in which less waste is produced, products are built to last and easy to repair, and remaining materials are recycled.

It's estimated that over 1.4 million pounds of single-use and rechargeable batteries are disposed of in Oregon each year, posing fire risks and contributing to the growing flow of e-waste into landfills.

We can keep battery waste from overwhelming the system by finding ways to reuse as much of the original product as we can. A producer responsibility program for batteries would provide a mechanism to reduce battery waste and ensure materials are recovered and repurposed while mitigating fire risks.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Brenna Stevens

Zero Waste Advocate

OSPIRG