Policies to address single-use plastics 2019

Nothing we use for ten minutes should pollute the environment for hundreds of years, and Oregonians across the state have been calling for action to limit plastic pollution. There are several bills in the 2019 Oregon Legislative Session to address this problem, but not all of them have the support of the environmental community. Here’s the lay of the land, in order of priority:

**Single-use plastic bags**

**House Bill 2509:** As written, this bill will do three important things:
- Bans single-use plastic grocery bags, but does not ban produce bags, trash bags, dog waste bags.
- Places a fee on paper bags to discourage customers from shifting from one single-use bag for another.
- Places a fee on thicker plastic bags, sometimes referred to as “reusable plastic bags,” to prevent a nefarious loophole.

No other bill limiting the use of single-use plastic bags meets these three required criteria for both the grocery industry and the environmental community, so we encourage the **SUPPORT** of House Bill 2509.

**Polystyrene**

**House Bill 2883:** As written, this bill will ban polystyrene (more commonly known as Styrofoam) takeout containers and cups across the state. No preemption clause. **SUPPORT.**

**Request only straws**

**Senate Bill 90 and House Bill 2670:** As written, these bills would require all restaurants in Oregon, including drive-thrus, counter service and traditional dine-in restaurants, to only provide plastic straws if the customer requests it. Does not include preemption clause. **SUPPORT.**
- -1 amendment on SB 90 would limit the bill to “full-service” restaurants and has preemption clause. **DO NOT SUPPORT.**
- -4 amendment expands restaurants (good) but has preemption (bad) **DO NOT SUPPORT**

**House Bill 2800:** As written, this bill would only apply to “full-service” restaurants and has a preemption clause. This bill will have a limited impact on preventing plastic pollution, since the bulk of straws are used in drive-thrus and restaurants with counter service, while also hamstringing local jurisdictions from passing meaningful straws policies. **DO NOT SUPPORT.**

The environmental community believes Straw Policy is too early in policy development to prescribe a statewide solution with preemption, see reverse for information for rationale on opposing straw policy preemption:
Why Preemption is Premature for Straw Policy?

• This is a very infant policy – it’s never been implemented anywhere in the state of Oregon, thus prescribing the statewide solution, definitively with preemption, is poor policy before we’ve implemented on the ground in at least one city. We are already learning challenges from CA implementation, which doesn’t include preemption.

• Cities are beginning to address single-use plastics with comprehensive policies that go well beyond the straw. Preemption on SB 90 would handcuff cities and require any city putting a comprehensive single use plastic policy together to carve out a special exception for straws.

• Preemption is a national strategy of the plastic industry to prevent any city, municipality or otherwise from seeking more aggressive plastic reduction strategies. Preemption in SB 90 provides this industry assurance and may do more to ensure plastic straws have a marketplace than actually reducing them.

For more information contact:
Charlie Plybon, Surfrider Foundation Oregon, cell 541-961-8143, cplybon@surfrider.org
Celeste Meiffren-Swango, Environment Oregon; cell: 323-580-8772, celeste@environmentoregon.org