

# Senate Bill 544: Doing Away With Throw Away

## *Reducing Single-Use Plastic Packaging and Foodware in Oregon*

### *Single-Use Plastic Threatens Oceans, Wildlife and Public Health*

Globally, 33 billion pounds of plastic enter the marine environment every year, devastating the world's oceans. Plastic does not go away - instead it breaks up into smaller pieces that can be mistaken for food by marine life, often with dire consequences. In Oregon, single use plastic packaging and foodware are a big part of the problem and are among the top five most picked up items at beach clean ups.<sup>1</sup> More than a third of the plastics produced each year are for packaging, which is often used once and thrown away.

What's worse is that most plastics are made from fossil fuels and are a significant source of global greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change, sea level rise and ocean acidification.<sup>2</sup> By 2050, greenhouse gas emissions from the full lifecycle of plastics would be equivalent to 615 coal-fired power plants accounting for 20% of global oil consumption.<sup>3</sup>

Plastics pose a risk to public health, as harmful chemicals migrate from plastic packaging into our food and beverages.<sup>4</sup> Nothing that is used for a few minutes should pollute our communities and environment for generations.

### *Recycling Cannot Solve the Plastics Crisis*

Recycling simply cannot keep pace with plastic production - only about 9% of all plastic waste ever produced has been recycled, 12% has been burned, and the remaining 79% has ended up in landfills or the environment. Most plastic packaging and foodware is not accepted in curbside recycling programs and often contaminates streams of otherwise recyclable material. Plastics place a huge financial and environmental burden on local communities throughout their lifecycle from production to disposal.

### **Oregon Senate Bill 544**

#### **Would:**

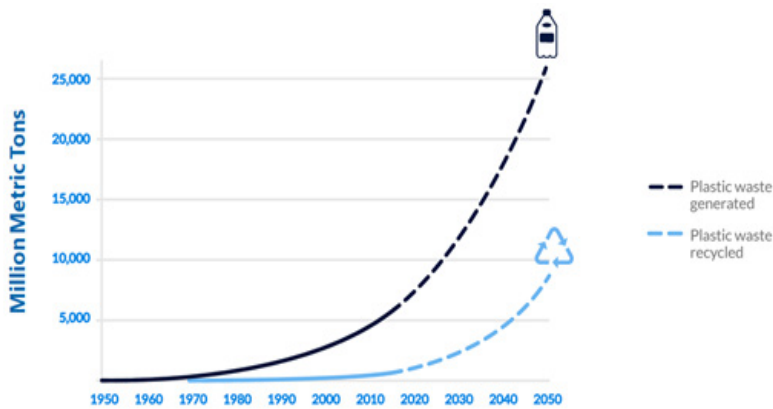
1. Require producers of single-use plastic foodware and packaging to reduce by 25% the total weight and units of those items sold or distributed in Oregon by January 1, 2030;
2. Require that at least 10% of the reductions are achieved by elimination or the development and utilization of infrastructure for reusable or refillable products;
3. Requires the Environmental Quality Commission to prohibit or limit foodware or packaging that it determines is unnecessary for the delivery of a product or food item.



33 billion pounds of plastic enter our oceans every year, degrading into smaller and smaller particles that can get mistaken as food by marine animals. © Shutterstock

**The real solution must be reduction.** Recycling is like trying to mop water from an overflowing bathtub while the faucet is still running. We need to turn off the faucet and reduce the production of single-use plastic. But that's not what's happening. Production is going through the roof, leading to a constant accumulation of plastic waste, which places a huge financial burden on local communities that often bear the costs to clean up plastic waste. Without immediate changes to the way we use plastics, the plastics industry expects annual production will more than triple by 2050.

## RECYCLING DOES NOT KEEP PACE WITH PLASTIC WASTE



Source: Adapted from Geyer et al. 2017

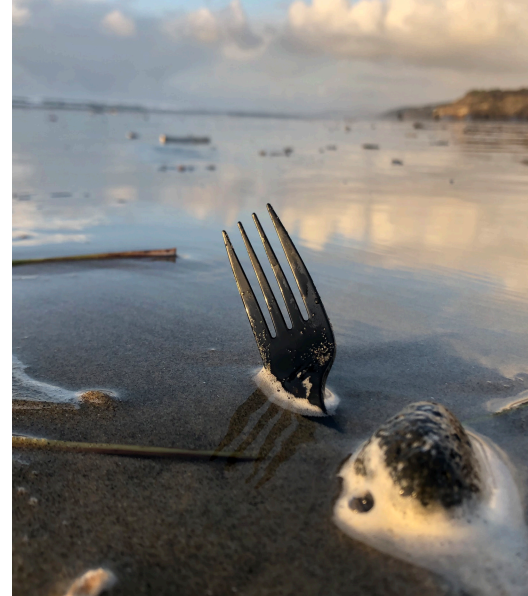
## Support SB 544

**SB 544** would require producers to reduce the amount of single-use plastic packaging and foodware by 25% by 2030 and move to reusable and refillable packaging. Oregon can drastically reduce the production and use of single-use plastic for the betterment of our environment, public health and local economies.

Nineteen local jurisdictions in Oregon have implemented laws aimed at reducing single-use plastics. And last year, California enacted the strongest plastic source reduction policy in the nation. The law requires significant cuts to single-use plastic packaging and foodware and will implement the first statewide reuse and refill mandates in the country. It's time for Oregon to do the same. That's why we need you to vote YES on SB 544.

### References

1. Surfrider and SOLVE combined beach cleanup data 2017 (200+ cleanups).
2. Center for International Environmental Law (2019). Plastic & Climate: The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet. Available: [www.ciel.org/plasticandclimate](http://www.ciel.org/plasticandclimate)
3. Shen, M, Huang, W., Chen, M., et al (2020). (Micro)plastic crisis: Un-ignorable contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, Journal of Cleaner Production, Volume 254
4. Muncke J, Myers JP, Scheringer M, et al (2014). Food packaging and migration of food contact materials: will epidemiologists rise to the neotoxic challenge. Epidemiol Community Health; 68:592-594; Geueke, B., and Muncke, J. (2018) Substances of Very High Concern in Food Contact Materials: Migration and Regulatory Background. Packag. Technol. Sci., 31: 757- 769



A single-use plastic take-out container and a single-use plastic fork found on Oregon beaches.  
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