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Oregon legislature passes bipartisan bill to eliminate bags made of plastic film at checkout

Legislation headed to Gov. Kotek for her approval

SALEM, Ore.—The Oregon Senate passed on Tuesday [Senate Bill 551](#), which would eliminate all bags made of plastic film at checkout at restaurants, grocery stores and other retail establishments in Oregon. The final, bipartisan concurrence vote was 22-8 in favor. The bill originally included provisions that would have required single-use plastic toiletries at lodging establishments to be available only upon request, as well as adding plastic utensils and condiments to Oregon's existing "straws upon request" laws. However, the Oregon House removed both of those sections. The bill now heads to Gov. Tina Kotek for her signature.

Oregon state Sen. Janeen Sollman and advocates who supported the bill celebrated the passage of Senate Bill 551 as an important step forward for reducing plastic pollution. They also expressed their commitment to pushing additional, commonsense, plastic reduction policies in the future:

"Wasteful disposable plastics like thick plastic checkout bags aren't just annoying for consumers, they add unnecessary costs to our Oregon businesses, and are contributing to an ever increasing pile of plastic trash that is harming the environment and public health," **said Sen. Sollman (SD-15)**. "Senate Bill 551 is an important step in addressing this large source of plastic pollution, and I'm proud to send it to the governor's desk."

"Nothing we use for just a few minutes should pollute the environment for hundreds of years," **said Celeste Meiffren-Swango, state director of Environment Oregon**. "While we're disappointed that the Oregon legislature missed the opportunity to address even more sources of plastic pollution, we're happy that it voted with broad, bipartisan support to eliminate those wasteful thick plastic bags at checkout. This bill will help reduce plastic waste, cut down on litter and build a cleaner, greener future. We look forward to seeing it signed into law."

"It's a shame that some individuals in the House couldn't support the 'ask first' portions of the bill, which really only stand to save businesses money and provide them and their customers with more freedom and choice to cut waste," **said Charlie Plybon, Oregon sr. policy manager for the Surfrider Foundation**. "But we're excited that the most substantive part of this bill—saying goodbye to those thicker plastic checkout bags— was enthusiastically supported and retained."

“While narrowing the scope of SB 551 was a missed opportunity, addressing pollution from plastic film bags is a huge win for our environment,” **said Tara Brock, Pacific legal director and senior counsel for Oceana.** “Flexible plastic is the deadliest type of plastic to marine animals, pollutes our parks and beaches, and gums up our local recycling facilities. Oregon is not immune to the impacts plastics are having on our oceans, communities, and climate. [Oregonians overwhelmingly support state policies](#) that reduce single-use plastic, and we commend the Oregon legislature for listening to their voices.”

“While there is no silver bullet to the plastic pollution crisis, research shows that bans work when it comes to reducing plastic pollution,” **said Dr. Anja Brandon, director of plastics policy for Ocean Conservancy.** “Targeting plastic grocery bags is particularly effective as they are among some of the most harmful and prevalent forms of single-use plastics found by Ocean Conservancy’s International Coastal Cleanup volunteers. We commend the legislature for passing SB 551 and look forward to working with the legislature to tackle additional sources of plastic pollution in the future.”

[Environment Oregon](#) is a policy and action group with one mission: to protect and restore the natural world.

The [Surfrider Foundation](#) is a nonprofit grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our world’s ocean, waves, and beaches for all people through a powerful activist network.

Oceana is the largest international advocacy organization dedicated solely to ocean conservation. Oceana is rebuilding abundant and biodiverse oceans by winning science-based policies in countries that control one-quarter of the world’s wild fish catch. With more than 325 victories that stop overfishing, habitat destruction, oil and plastic pollution, and the killing of threatened species like turtles, whales, and sharks, Oceana’s campaigns are delivering results. A restored ocean means that 1 billion people can enjoy a healthy seafood meal every day, forever. Together, we can save the oceans and help feed the world. Visit [Oceana.org](#) to learn more.

Ocean Conservancy is working to protect the ocean from today’s greatest global challenges. Together with our partners, we create evidence-based solutions for a healthy ocean and the wildlife and communities that depend on it. For more information, visit [oceanconservancy.org](#), or follow us on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) or [Instagram](#).