



It was pretty hard to miss that this year's legislative session in Oregon was tough. With ten Republican senators participating in the longest walk-out in Oregon's history it ground our state's governing body almost to a halt. It wasn't clear until a mere ten days until the end of session that enough Republicans would return, enabling the legislature to continue its business of serving the people of this state. To say that this anti-democratic behavior has to stop would be an understatement. Yet, despite their best efforts to shut down the state due to their opposition to gun control, abortion rights, and gender affirming care, we were collectively able to accomplish a great deal in the 2023 Oregon Legislative Session.

### **Our Priorities:**

**1) Passed: The Climate Resilience Package** - these bills (HB 3409 and HB 3630) were a package created by the House Speaker and Senate President's office to make sure the state didn't miss a beat in progressing transformative climate policies this session once (if) the Republican Senators returned to work. This package includes our Building Resilience and Natural Climate Solutions bills, all of which were major priorities for the session. In short: This comprehensive package brings together and provides \$90 million in funding for more than a dozen bills related to climate action—helping Oregon compete for the billions of dollars of Federal funding on the table from the Inflation Reduction Act.

**2) Toxic Free Package** - Two of our bills in this three bills package passed once the Senate Republicans decided to come back to work:

- **Passed: Toxic Free Kids Act Modernization (HB 3043)** - Once the Republicans returned we were able to pass this overdue bill that updates Oregon's Toxic Free Kids Act by allowing more chemicals to be added to it to better protect our children from harmful toxins.
- **Passed: Toxic Free Cosmetics (SB 546)** - This bill requiring personal care product companies publish all the ingredients of their products on their websites, and leads to the phasing out of the most toxic chemicals (like formaldehyde) also passed once the Republicans came back to work.
- **Did Not Pass: Toxic Free Schools (SB 426)** - Unfortunately this bill, which would have funded the creation of a pesticide tracking system on school grounds and would have required transitioning to less or non-toxic alternatives, did not make it out of the powerful Ways and Means committee. This bill may have had a chance had time not been so limited by the Republican walk out, but we hope to make progress on this in the 2024 short session.

**3) Zero Waste Package** - two of the bills in this four bill package made it over the finish line this year, at least one that didn't make it would have, had the walkout not occurred and there was a little more time to amend and move the bill.

- **Passed: Styrofoam Phase Out (SB 543)** - Passed before the walkout! This bill phases out the use of styrofoam in food to-go containers, as well as bans the use of highly carcinogenic PFAS chemicals in food packaging.
- **Passed: Legalizing Reusable Containers (SB 545)** - Passed before the walkout! Updates Oregon law to allow for reusable containers to be used in the bulk section of the supermarket and for eating out.
- **Did Not Pass: Right to Repair (SB 542)** - would have reduced electronic waste and saved people hundreds of dollars a year by allowing them to repair their own electronics, similar to how we get our cars repaired. We ran out of time at the end of session, due to the walk out, to amend and move this bill to a vote. This will be a priority for the short session in 2024.
- **Did Not Pass: Reducing Plastic at the Source (SB 544)** - A bill that would have required a 25% Reduction of Single Use Packaging in 10 Years. Unfortunately, this bill did not make it past the first first chamber deadline. Sometimes it takes several tries to pass transformative bills like this.

**4) Climate, Environment, and Natural Resources Budget** - It's challenging to tell the story of the budget in a short talking point. But at the end of the day, we had a very substantial climate budget in the 2023 session. We took some hits—with cuts to the Marine Reserves Program, the only program that protects ocean habitats in the state of Oregon, and with an additional (unnecessary) \$800,000 dollars going to the Wolf Compensation Fund. It's never satisfying to see cuts to key programs, while other programs get more money they don't need. However, in a year where we were expecting dramatic cuts, we got lucky with a much rosier budget forecast in the middle of the session that helped keep our budgets stronger than expected overall. We didn't hold on to all the gains in the last couple sessions, but we fared well on the budget front.

**5) Weakened Bill Passed: The Factory Farm Moratorium** - After four public hearings where farmers, rural community members, and environmental advocates testified in favor of protecting Oregon's farmers, rural communities, and our air, water, and climate from factory farming, we ended up needing to make a compromise to get the bill passed. The version of SB 85 that ultimately passed limits the amount of water that farms can use to water their livestock (something that until now has been completely unregulated). Though this version of the bill was not strong enough to remain a priority bill, it is still a significant first step to regulating factory farms, and it will help to protect the Willamette Valley from the big chicken factory farms that are eager to take over our state.

### **Major Threats:**

While six Major Threat bills were introduced this session, we either succeeded in killing those bills, or negotiated to make them substantially better. Several major threat bills that would have weakened Oregon's land use laws for such projects as developing ports or expanding microchip production (SB 4) were improved. We also worked hard to make sure that the majority of

Oregonians and our pro-conservation values are better represented on the Fish and Wildlife Commission by significantly improving a bill to reform the Commission responsible for overseeing the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (HB 3086). With so many of you speaking up, we were able to get significant improvements to bills that passed, and killed the Major Threats that were not improved—like HB 2659 which would have rolled back Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities. Incredibly, thanks to all of our efforts, **not a single major threat bill passed in the 2023 Legislative Session.**

As happens every session, some hard compromises were made, some bad bills passed, and too many good bills died (like 100% Clean Energy for Data Centers and regulation of deadly diesel pollution from indirect sources). As always, we will keep up the fight in future legislative sessions to protect our public health, climate, wildlife, and our environment.

Please keep an eye out for the 2023 OLCV Legislative Scorecard to get a deeper analysis of how all the environmental, climate, and environmental bills fared this legislative session.

Thank you for everything you did to help us get important bills passed this session and for helping us stop the worst bills from passing. [Please take a moment today to send a message to your lawmakers—either to thank them for being champions on the Climate Resilience Package, or to let them know you would have appreciated a yes vote from them.](#) And for a deeper dive into what happened this session, keep an eye out for our scorecard in the fall.

Thank you for all that you do,

Julia DeGraw

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julia B. DeGraw", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Coalition Director, OLCV