



Americans dispose of 416,000 cell phones per day, and only 15 to 20 percent of electronic waste is recycled. Photo credit: Prostock-studio via Shutterstock

## RIGHT TO REPAIR

# Five reasons why Oregon should pass Right to Repair

We rely on our cellphones and computers to work, learn and stay connected. When our device breaks, we need to be able to fix it for a reasonable price.

Unfortunately, manufacturer restrictions on access to parts, tools and information make it more difficult for consumers and independent repair shops to fix these devices. As a result, we end up paying more and waiting longer for repairs, or just tossing otherwise-fixable devices in favor of newer models.

OSPIRG is calling on the Oregon Legislature to pass Right to Repair legislation for personal electronics in the 2024 legislative session. The Right to Repair would make it easier for Oregonians to fix our own personal electronic devices and some household appliances by expanding access to the manufacturers' parts, tools and diagnostic information needed to make repairs.

Here are five reasons the Oregon legislature

should pass Right to Repair for personal electronics and household appliances:

### 1. Right to Repair saves consumers money

The average American household owns 24 electronic devices and spends roughly \$1,480 each year on new ones. PIRG has found that families could save 22% of that each year if they extended the lifespan of their devices by half through repair. That's an average of \$330 per household per year.

### 2. Right to Repair is good for the planet

We can't simply replace our devices every time they get damaged. Oregonians are throwing away an average of 4,800 cell phones every day. E-waste, the fastest-growing form of waste,

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OSPIRG and The Public Interest Network are celebrating 50 years of action for a change.

## RIGHT TO REPAIR CONT.



OSPIRG's Charlie Fisher with state Sen. Janeen Sollman (left) and Environment Oregon's Celeste Meiffren-Swango. State Sen. Sollman is one of the chief sponsors of the Right to Repair bill in Oregon.

often contains dangerous materials such as lead and mercury. What's more, researchers have found that 85% of a smartphone's environmental impact comes from the raw materials used to manufacture it.

Throwing out broken devices and manufacturing new ones is damaging our planet. Right to Repair would help keep our devices in use for longer, which would bring enormous environmental benefits.

### 3. Right to Repair helps to bridge the digital divide

Repair monopolies do not affect everyone equally. While repair may be relatively accessible in urban areas, the limited number of manufacturer-authorized repair providers leaves rural or suburban consumers with few options. For Oregonians outside of urban centers, then, a broken device likely means a long trip to the nearest authorized repair shop, or even longer shipping times.

Especially in today's age of remote work and online classes, being unable to fix a device in a timely and/or affordable manner can be a major setback in school or the workplace.

### 4. Right to Repair supports small businesses

People can't always afford to wait for a manufacturer halfway across the state or the country to fix their devices. As a result, repair shops have popped up, giving consumers convenient options for repair, offering technical training and education, and creating stable, local jobs for engineers. Many repair shops are small, independently run businesses that cannot survive when manufacturers prevent them from performing repairs. Right to Repair would protect

these small, local businesses.

More than 70 small businesses from across Oregon have signed on in support of Right to Repair.

### 5. Right to Repair is popular

Right to Repair is gaining momentum nationwide. A bill guaranteeing the Right to Repair personal electronics passed the New York Legislature in 2022 with near-unanimous majorities in both chambers. At the federal level, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) published a report in May 2021 debunking popular arguments against Right to Repair, while President Biden issued an executive order in July 2021 calling on the FTC to pursue rules to allow for Right to Repair.

Additionally, we talked to thousands of Oregonians across the state about Right to Repair last year. We received more than 6,600 petition signatures in support of Right to Repair legislation in Oregon.

Oregon legislators have a great opportunity to pass a policy that saves consumers money, protects the planet, helps to bridge the digital divide, and supports small businesses.

For all these reasons, the Oregon Legislature should pass Right to Repair for personal electronics in the 2024 legislative session.

## NEWS BRIEFS

### CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY PIRG urged Mastercard to stop selling user data

Almost every company we interact with collects some amount of data on us. Often, it's more information than they really need—and it's often used for secondary purposes that have nothing to do with delivering the service we're expecting to get.

Mastercard collects data about its cardholders—like how much they spend, where and on what day. It makes sense that Mastercard uses this information to complete transactions.

What doesn't make sense is that Mastercard then uses that data for purposes that have nothing to do with being a credit card—like selling it to data brokers, advertisers and other third parties. It doesn't need to sell our data to be a

#### OUR MISSION

When consumers are cheated or the voices of ordinary citizens are drowned out by special interest lobbyists, PIRG speaks up and takes action. We uncover threats to public health and well-being and fight to end them, using the time-tested tools of investigative research, media exposes, grassroots organizing, advocacy and litigation. PIRG's mission is to deliver persistent, results oriented public interest activism that protects consumers, encourages a fair, sustainable economy and fosters responsive democratic government.

## NEWS BRIEFS

credit card—but it's profitable for it to do so.

We're urging Mastercard to commit to using the transaction data it collects for what we're expecting—being a safe, secure credit card and nothing else.

When we stand together to protect our data, we can convince Mastercard to change its practices. Sign our petition on our website to let Mastercard know its data sales need to stop. You can also email Mastercard's privacy complaints email ([privacyanddataprotection@mastercard.com](mailto:privacyanddataprotection@mastercard.com)) and send them the clear message: Stop selling my data.

### BEYOND PLASTIC

#### Costco makes new commitments to reduce plastic use

Thanks to your support, OSPIRG and our national network delivered more than 82,000 petitions urging Costco to cut back on wasteful packaging—and the company is listening.

Costco Wholesale has committed to increasing its transparency about its plastic use and developing a 5-year action plan to reduce the amount of plastic it uses. A growing body of data suggests that plastics and microplastics pose significant threats to public health and our environment.

Costco has committed to releasing data on the total plastic footprint—broken down by type of plastic—of its in-house brand, Kirkland Signature, by July 2024. The big box retailer has also committed to disclosing the percentage of recycled content used in its plastic packaging by that same date. Additionally, in December 2024, the company will release a 5-year plastic "action plan" that will outline the steps the company will take to reduce plastic in its Kirkland Signature packaging.

Costco's commitments come after calls from both shareholders and the general public.

### CLEAN AIR

#### Leaf blowers aren't just noisy—they're also huge polluters

You know that annoying sound all too well—the ear-piercing whine of your neighbor's leaf blower.

But as it turns out, gas-powered leaf blowers



Seattle Fox 13

and other lawn equipment are more than just a noisy neighborhood nuisance, with some machines emitting as much pollution in an hour as driving hundreds of miles in a car. And that pollution is released right in the middle of our neighborhoods, where people live and breathe, putting our health at risk.

The good news is electric lawn equipment is cleaner, quieter—and, over a lifetime of use, often cheaper—than gasoline-powered machines. Moreover, electric options are often just as capable as fossil fuel versions.

Our network recently released a new report across the country called "Lawn care goes electric" to help educate the public and call for cities and states around the country to take action to encourage the transition from gasoline-powered lawn equipment to clean electric options.

Visit our website to check out the report and learn more about why transitioning to electric lawn equipment is a good idea.

*R.J. Cross, director of PIRG's Don't Sell My Data campaign, speaks to the media about protecting consumer data.*

#### GO PAPERLESS!

Sign up for the latest OSPIRG news, updates and alerts sent directly to your inbox at: [ospirg.org](mailto:ospirg.org).



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# OSPIRG

CITIZEN AGENDA • WINTER 2024

50  
YEARS

OSPIRG and our national network are celebrating 50 years of action for a change. The Public Interest Network operates and supports organizations committed to a shared vision of a better world and a strategic approach to social change.

## BEYOND PLASTIC

# Amazon announces the end of plastic-padded shipping bags

In July 2023, Amazon announced that it would be “phasing out padded bags containing plastics in favor of recyclable alternatives.”

The eventual end of the blue and white plastic mailing envelopes is welcome news. Most plastic is landfilled, burned in incinerators, or broken into small pieces in the environment, rather than being recycled. Plastics have been found in nearly every corner of the globe, as well as in human bodies, potentially with harmful impacts.

Amazon is changing its practices after PIRG worked with Environment America and other allies to call on the company to reduce its single-use plastic packaging. Similar actions also have resulted in 1 in every 3 Americans living in a state with a ban of at least one type of single-use plastic. The action



PIRG staff delivered more than 97,000 petition signatures from members and supporters urging Amazon to “break up with plastic” on Valentine’s Day in 2023.

of one company or a few states won’t solve the whole plastic waste problem. But each new commitment to reduce plastic waste paves the way for the next.

Thanks to your action and support, we’ll continue to urge companies to reduce wasteful plastic packaging.

## FEATURED STAFF



**Charlie Fisher:** Charlie directs OSPIRG’s campaigns to rein in the cost of health care, get big money out of politics and stand up for consumers. In a previous advocacy role with Environment Oregon, Charlie was part of successful efforts to increase Oregon’s clean energy commitments and get the Beaver State off coal. His work has earned coverage in The Oregonian and other local and regional news outlets around Oregon.

Kimball Nelson

Ricky Osborne Photography

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