

2023 PROGRAM REPORT



OSPIRG

ACTION IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

YOUR SUPPORT MADE IT POSSIBLE



DEAR MEMBER

As a consumer advocate, OSPIRG can help people save a dollar or avoid a scam. But people have come to expect so much more from PIRG’s unique brand of consumer action.

After all, in today’s economy, the best deal may be the one that measures value in terms of quality, not quantity. Healthcare that prioritizes wellness, for example, over the most costly treatments. Or products that last, and can be repaired, repurposed and recycled, sparing us (and the planet) the costs of waste.

In this report, you’ll find PIRG staff and members taking action and winning results to reduce wasteful plastic packaging, expand the right to repair, and more.

We’re grateful that so many people like you support PIRG’s advocacy and action. Thank you.



Charlie Fisher
State Director

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

“PIRG keeps me informed. A variety of topics are covered from individual changes I can make to larger government issues that I can at least sign letters of concern. I greatly appreciate PIRG for fighting for a safer, healthier world.”

Helen M., Member

ACTION IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST
RIGHT TO REPAIR



Victory: Oregon passed Right to Repair legislation

Things just aren't made to last anymore, resulting in more waste and more cost to consumers. In 2023, OSPIRG advocated for legislation that would make it easier for Oregonians to fix our stuff by expanding access to the manufacturers' parts, tools and diagnostic information needed to make repairs.

Last summer, OSPIRG talked to thousands of Oregonians like you and gathered more than 6,600 petition signatures in support of Right to Repair legislation. And in March 2024, the state passed a law that gives every consumer and small repair shop access to the parts and service information necessary to fix various personal electronic devices and some household appliances.



Photos: (Left) State Sen. Janeen Sollman stops by to brief OSPIRG staff on Right to Repair. (Above, clockwise) OSPIRG State Director Charlie Fisher and state Sen. Sollman canvass local residents; a repairperson works on a laptop; Charlie with (from left to right) Environment Oregon's Celeste Meiffren-Swango, iFixit CEO Kyle Weins, state Sen. Sollman and her staffperson Nickole Vargas. Credits: (Left) Staff. (Above, clockwise) Staff, Roman Chazov via Shutterstock, Staff.

ACTION IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST
BEYOND PLASTIC



AMAZON:
BREAK UP
WITH PLASTICS



BREAK
UP WITH
PLASTICS

LESS PLASTIC
IS MY VALENTINE!

97,555

LESS
PLASTIC
IS MY
VALENTINE

BEYOND
PLASTIC
PIRG.org

Amazon.
Let's break up
with plastic!
PIRG

Waste reduced: Amazon is phasing out padded plastic bags

It can be frustrating trying to reduce plastic in your own life when it's all but impossible to avoid. It's even more frustrating when you put it in the blue bin, but it doesn't get recycled as promised.

After a group of PIRG volunteers investigated and found that the plastic Amazon shipping packaging they tried to recycle was instead sent to the landfill, PIRG supporters like you and our national coalition delivered more than 138,000 petition signatures to the company urging it to eliminate plastic in U.S. shipments. And in July, Amazon responded, announcing it would phase out padded plastic shipping bags in favor of recyclable alternatives.



Photos: (Left) PIRG staff and volunteers deliver more than 97,000 Valentine's Day petition signatures to Amazon headquarters in February. (Above, left to right) A Student PIRG volunteer outside Amazon headquarters; PIRG's Jenn Engstrom holds up an electronic tracker, which we used to follow Amazon's plastic packaging to landfills. Credits: (Left) Ricky Osborne. (Above, left to right) Ricky Osborne, Staff, ErickPHOTOPRO via Shutterstock.

ACTION IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

CONSUMER PROTECTION



Consumers protected: We pushed for data privacy

In 2023, PIRG’s consumer watchdog team alerted the public to dangerous products aimed at kids—and called for changes to keep kids safe. Our national research partners’ 38th annual “Trouble in Toyland” report warned parents of unsafe toys. We also took on internet- and bluetooth-connected devices, which can expose children to inappropriate content, health risks and data privacy threats.

We helped pass two bills focused on data privacy protections here in Oregon. The first gives consumers more control over the sale and storage of their data and the second requires data brokers who collect, share and sell personal information about Oregonians to register with the state.



Photos: (Left) PIRG’s R.J. Cross demonstrates the Meta Quest 3 virtual reality headset at a press conference. (Above, clockwise) PIRG’s Teresa Murray speaks with KAEF about unsafe toys; a young student uses a tablet to take notes; a child plays with a VR headset. Credits: (Left) Tim O’Connor. (Above, clockwise) KAEF, karelnoppe via Shutterstock, bbernard via Shutterstock.

BAN TOXIC PFAS



Kong Lor

In June, the Oregon Legislature passed two OSPIRG-supported laws. Together, the new legislation strengthens the 2015 Toxic Free Kids Act, requires public disclosure about the worst carcinogens found in cosmetics and personal care items, and bans the sale of such products in Oregon.

HIGH VALUE HEALTH CARE



Ways and Means Committee Republicans via YouTube

In March, OSPIRG released a report that found Oregon hospitals charged prices that were 60% higher than break-even levels to commercially insured patients. We drew on these findings to advocate for bringing costs in line with the provision of care and offered practical strategies—such as state-designed insurance plans—to reduce premiums.

BEYOND PLASTIC



wk1003mike via Shutterstock

Two OSPIRG-supported plastic reduction bills became law in 2023. The first bans statewide polystyrene takeout containers, reducing one of the worst forms of single-use plastic. The second updates Oregon's health code to establish legal reuse systems and allows consumers to supply their own containers to cut down on wasteful packaging.

PIRG **W** CONSUMER WATCHDOG



CBS News

In July, PIRG warned that two-thirds of phone companies had not yet adopted robocall-fighting technology, as required by law. Scam calls are a huge problem—consumers defrauded over the phone lost a median of \$1,400 in 2022. PIRG called on the Federal Communications Commission to crack down on illegal robocalls.

CLEAN AIR OREGON

CLEANER, QUIETER LAWN CARE



Roman023_photography via Shutterstock

In October, PIRG released a report warning that gasoline-powered lawn equipment is dirtier than you might expect—for example, using a commercial gas-powered leaf blower for one hour emits as much smog-forming pollution as 15 cars. Our advocates shined a spotlight on cleaner, quieter electric alternatives.

STOP THE OVERUSE OF ANTIBIOTICS



Metroid Video

In December, PIRG celebrated a win when a federal court ruled that an antibiotic important to human health couldn't be used as a citrus tree pesticide. The overuse of antibiotics is fueling the rise of drug-resistant bacteria, and PIRG is continuing to advocate for the responsible use of these life-saving drugs.

50 YEARS OF ACTION & RESULTS

OSPIRG is part of a federation of independent, state-based, citizen funded Public Interest Research Groups. Together, we have a long legacy of victories in the public interest—including state and local wins that have provided blueprints for action nationwide.

1971: First PIRGs founded

Students start the first college campus chapters of Minnesota PIRG, Missouri PIRG and Oregon Student PIRG. PIRGs form in 20 more states over the next decade, and U.S. PIRG is founded in 1983.

1982: MASSPIRG saves the Bottle Bill

After winning a 9-year campaign to pass the Bottle Bill, MASSPIRG faced a new challenge: an industry attempt to repeal it. More than 8,000 citizen volunteers got to work, ultimately helping to defeat the repeal with a convincing 59% of the vote.



1984: PIRG hits student voter registration milestone

PIRG's newly launched National Student Campaign for Voter Registration registers 750,000 student voters in its first year, increasing the registration of 18- to 24-year-old voters by 17%.

1986: PIRG wins drinking water protections

PIRG plays a key role in passing strong new federal Safe Drinking Water Act amendments to better protect groundwater sources of drinking water and increase the pace at which contaminants are regulated.

1989: 'Trouble in Toyland' report sparks action

PIRG's first annual "Trouble in Toyland" report is released, warning parents of the hidden dangers of certain toys on the market. U.S. PIRG Education Fund has since published 36 other reports, resulting in more than 150 recalls.

1989: MASSPIRG wins law to reduce toxics

MASSPIRG authors and wins the passage of the Toxics Use Reduction Act, requiring industries to publicly disclose their use of toxic chemicals for the first time and plan for future reductions.



Photos: (Above, left to right) MASSPIRG's Mindy Lubber and Doug Phelps promote the Massachusetts Bottle Bill in 1981; PIRG's Lucinda Sikes speaks to the media about toy safety; Tufts University students show support for Massachusetts' hazardous waste initiative. Credits: Staff; staff; staff.



Five decades ago, groups of college students began investigating problems from shady business practices to illegal pollution. They called themselves PIRG—Public Interest Research Groups. OSPIRG and the PIRG network are celebrating 50 years of action for a change.



1998: PIRG wins reduction of pesticides in schools

CALPIRG, MASSPIRG and Maryland PIRG help win a series of laws to reduce the use of pesticides linked to cancer and other serious health problems in public schools throughout the 1990s and early 2000s.

2010: PIRG helps create CFPB

PIRG co-founds a coalition that, alongside U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, wins the creation of the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). Since opening its doors in 2011, the CFPB has helped return \$16 billion in relief for consumers.

2012: PIRG helps win national clean car standards

Following years of advocacy by the state PIRGs, the Obama administration implements new national clean car standards calling for the average mile-per-gallon standard across the U.S. fleet of cars to hit 54.5 by 2025.

2014: California bans single-use plastic bags

After building support in cities and counties, CALPIRG helps pass the nation's first statewide ban on single-use plastic bags in California. Ten more states follow suit over the next decade.



2015: Tyson Foods announces antibiotics phase-out

PIRG helps convince the nation's largest poultry producer, Tyson Foods, to commit to no longer using medically important antibiotics in their chicken, paving the way for other corporations to follow suit.

2018: PIRG helps win free credit freezes for consumers

In the wake of several high profile data breaches, including at credit bureau Equifax, PIRG helps pass a federal bill ensuring access to free credit freezes for all consumers to help prevent damage from identify theft.

Photos: (Above, left to right) CALPIRG staff attorney Teri Olle shakes Gov. Gray Davis' hand after he signed the Healthy Schools Act into law; PIRG helped build a coalition across California to build voter support for Prop 67, which banned single-use plastic bags; PIRG's Sujatha Jahagirdar Bergen speaks about antibiotic resistance in 2014. Credits: Staff; staff; Beverly Jensen Photography.



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To see a full staff list and learn more about our campaigns, visit us online at ospirg.org/about/team.