

OSPIRG



OSPIRG State Director Charlie Fisher speaks at a press conference on the release of a report ranking major electronics manufacturers on the repairability of their devices. Photo credit: Nate Illebody via Free Geek, used by permission

RIGHT TO REPAIR

The Right to Repair and why it matters to Oregon

Not that long ago, when you bought a product it came with a manual, it was relatively easy to repair, and its parts were widely available. Not so much anymore.

Manufacturers of electronics and appliances too often require consumers to go back to the manufacturer or their “authorized service providers.” These legal, digital and physical barriers make it all but impossible for the owner of the product to repair their own stuff.

The results include money wasted by consumers on new products they don’t actually need as well as waste in the form of trash, much of it toxic. In Oregon alone, we toss away an estimated 1.75 million cell phones per year. Americans dispose of an estimated 416,000 cell phones every day, a manufacturing habit that takes some 23.7 million tons of raw material to satisfy each year.

The Right to Repair bill would let us fix our stuff

That’s why we’re working to pass the Right to Repair bill in Oregon—to give every consumer and every small repair shop access to the parts, tools and service information they need to repair our stuff.

The Right to Repair bill would also be good for our environment. Consider this: 85% of the energy and climate impact associated with a smartphone comes from manufacturing. Therefore, if every Oregonian extended the life of their phone by just one year, it would be the climate pollution equivalent of removing 8,100 cars from the road.

Being able to fix phones, computers and appliances instead of buying new would also save the

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

Thanks
for making it
all possible

WHY RIGHT TO REPAIR MATTERS TO OREGON CONT.



The OSPIRG canvass team ready to hit the streets in support of Right to Repair in Oregon.

average Oregon household \$382 per year. That adds up to \$649 million in savings across all Oregon households every year.

A surging Right to Repair movement

Here's the good news: There's growing momentum for the right to repair in Oregon and across the county:

- In 2021, President Biden issued an executive order encouraging the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to enact new rules removing manufacturer restrictions on third-party and do-it-yourself repair of devices and equipment.
- The FTC's commissioners have already unanimously voted to take a more aggressive approach to rooting out harmful repair restrictions.
- Since then, New York has passed a Right to Repair law for electronics, Colorado has passed one for agricultural equipment and electric wheelchairs, and Minnesota passed the country's strongest Right to Repair law. More than 20 states have introduced Right to Repair bills in 2023.

Oregon's next opportunity to pass Right to Repair

We were within one vote of passing the Right to Repair bill through the state Senate this year, and we have a plan to get it over the finish line next year.

Early next year, lawmakers will meet again in a "short session" of just 35 days, designed to carry out "unfinished business." We're making

a case to lawmakers that they should consider the Right to Repair bill a priority. And we've been going door to door this summer to talk to members like you and the rest of the public about why passing this bill is so important.

It's hard to imagine another bill that would have such a positive impact on so many Oregon consumers as well as our environment. Add your name in support of Right to Repair in Oregon at ospirg.org.

NEWS BRIEFS

HEALTH CARE

OSPIRG member shares her story at public hearing

Michelle has been struggling with medical debt over the last three years. After two bouts of COVID, mold poisoning, ongoing respiratory problems and other health conditions that have affected her ability to work, she has spent through her entire savings—twice—and still has medical bills to pay off, along with her regular expenses.

"I had dreams of finishing my education and buying a new home. Now I'm 54 and have no retirement ... Nobody chooses to go into debt like this," she shared during Oregon's Sustainable Health Care Cost Growth Target public hearing on May 17.

Unfortunately, Michelle's story is all too common. Individuals across Oregon are struggling with premiums, deductibles, medical bills, prescriptions and more, trying to keep themselves and their families healthy without breaking the bank. At OSPIRG, we've heard dozens of stories from families who have chosen to endure pain and other health issues because they were afraid of the cost.

Michelle took a brave step forward to help us show lawmakers and other state decision-makers why this is so important to her. You can help, too—share your story with us at voicesforbettercare.org.

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.

KIDS' HEALTH

We're making your voice heard on mercury pollution

Mercury is dangerous—it can do serious damage to a child's developing brain. Yet we still allow it to pour from the smokestacks of coal-fired power plants. And mercury isn't the only toxic substance being pumped out of coal-fired power plants. Lead, nickel and arsenic are too.

The good news: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed new rules that will cut back on these toxic emissions by about two-thirds—a lifesaving difference for communities in the shadow of fossil fuel plants.

Not everyone is on board with these common-sense measures. Powerful senators are pushing back, so we and other groups in our national network delivered more than 42,900 public comments to the EPA in support of the strongest possible rules to rein in mercury and other toxic pollution.

The best way to cut this kind of toxic pollution out of our lives would be to stop relying on fossil fuels for power at all. But for right now, strengthening toxic pollution standards and reducing the amount of mercury in our air is the best way to protect our health and the health of our children and grandchildren.

TOXIC THREATS

Major PFAS manufacturer will pay more than \$10 billion for cleanup

The chemical manufacturer 3M announced in June that it would pay up to \$10.3 billion to settle lawsuits over poly- and perfluoroalkyl (PFAS) contamination of drinking water systems.

These oil- and water-resistant compounds have been used in some firefighting foam and consumer products for decades. The chemicals are so prevalent in homes and communities that nearly every American has PFAS in their blood.

PFAS are nicknamed "forever chemicals" because they don't break down in the environment or in the body. Researchers have linked these chemicals to a host of serious health issues, including cancer.



Staff

Science tells us that PFAS in food and water puts our health at risk, so it's unacceptable that companies continue to use them so widely. This settlement will go a long way toward cleaning up drinking water for millions of Americans, but the costs to our health and our environment are likely to be far larger. We need to keep holding polluting industries accountable so taxpayers don't have to foot the bill.

PIRG staff deliver comments to the EPA to cut mercury pollution.

GO PAPERLESS!
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For more information call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: plannedgiving@ospirg.org

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OSPIRG
CITIZEN AGENDA • SUMMER 2023

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.

RIGHT TO REPAIR

Amazon announces end of its plastic padded shipping bags

On July 19, Amazon announced that it is “phasing out padded bags containing plastics in favor of recyclable alternatives.” The e-commerce company also said its use of single-use plastic across its global operations network (i.e., orders shipped through its fulfillment centers) declined by 11.6% from 2021 to 2022.

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

“The plastic that Amazon and other e-retailers wrap around our online deliveries litters our communities soon



In 2021, Amazon generated over 700 million pounds of plastic waste.

after we open our packages and can linger for decades,” said Charlie Fisher, state director with OSPIRG. “It’s great to see Amazon commit to phasing out some of its plastic packaging. Now, Amazon should set an ambitious deadline for that phase-out while continuing to reduce its plastic footprint by eliminating all single-use plastic in its shipments.”

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

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