**Thank you for your interest in helping to create the ASWWU Legislative Agenda!**

The following guidelines will provide you with the information that you will need to put together your proposal to the AS Board of Directors and AS Legislative Affairs Council.

Legislative proposals should answer questions listed below under **‘considerations for presenters’** in roughly 600 words. Each proposal will be allotted a total of 20 minutes for presentation and questions from the Legislative Affairs Council.

**Proposals**

**Issue: Statewide Ban on Single-Use Plastic Bags**

**Presenter(s): Bennett Massey-Helber**

**Endorsements: Various State Legislators Depending on the Ask:**

**Senators:** [**Das**](http://leg.wa.gov/senate/senators/pages/default.aspx#das)**,** [**Carlyle**](http://leg.wa.gov/senate/senators/pages/default.aspx#carlyle)**,** [**Kuderer**](http://leg.wa.gov/senate/senators/pages/default.aspx#kuderer)**,** [**Palumbo**](http://leg.wa.gov/senate/senators/pages/default.aspx#palumbo)**,** [**Hunt**](http://leg.wa.gov/senate/senators/pages/default.aspx#hunt)**,** [**Rolfes**](http://leg.wa.gov/senate/senators/pages/default.aspx#rolfes)**,** [**Frockt**](http://leg.wa.gov/senate/senators/pages/default.aspx#frockt)**,** [**Keiser**](http://leg.wa.gov/senate/senators/pages/default.aspx#keiser)**,** [**Pedersen**](http://leg.wa.gov/senate/senators/pages/default.aspx#pedersen)**,**[**Saldaña**](http://leg.wa.gov/senate/senators/pages/default.aspx#saldaa)

**Representatives:** [**Peterson**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#peterson)**,** [**Orwall**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#orwall)**,** [**Doglio**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#doglio)**,** [**Senn**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#senn)**,** [**Mead**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#mead)**,** [**Gregerson**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#gregerson)**,** [**Fitzgibbon**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#fitzgibbon)**,** [**Dolan**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#dolan)**,** [**Ortiz-Self**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#ortiz-self)**,** [**Lovick**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#lovick)**,** [**Frame**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#frame)**,** [**Slatter**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#slatter)**,** [**Walen**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#walen)**,** [**Macri**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#macri)**,** [**Goodman**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#goodman)**,** [**Tarleton**](http://leg.wa.gov/house/representatives/pages/default.aspx#tarleton)

Single use plastic bags have a profound negative impact on the environment. According to the EPA, the U.S. accounts for 34.5 million tons of plastic waste per year.[[1]](#footnote-32156) Americans use 100 billion plastic bags a year, which require 12 million barrels of oil to manufacture.[[2]](#footnote-16569) Additionally, the average family in the United States uses 1,500 plastic bags per year, and only 1% of plastic bags are recycled, meaning that the average family throws away 1,485 plastic bags a year.[[3]](#footnote-3969) Furthermore, plastic bag waste is especially damaging to marine wildlife, killing 100,000 marine animals annually.[[4]](#footnote-14676)

Critics have raised concerns that plastic bag bans are often offset by consumers needing to buy more trash bags, but even then, “in California, for example, Rebecca Taylor, an economist at the University of Sydney, found that shoppers in cities that banned bags before the 2016 statewide ban took effect used fewer shopping bags, leading to a reduction of about 40 million pounds of plastic waste. But she found in her study that sales of trash bags rose, offsetting the reduction in plastic bags to 28 million pounds.” However, even with the sales of trash bags offsetting the bag ban in California, plastic waste was still reduced by 12 million pounds.

In Washington State, Bainbridge Island, Bellingham, Edmonds, Ellensburg, Everett, Friday Harbor, Gig Harbor, Issaquah, Kirkland, Lacey, La Conner, Mukilteo, Olympia, Port Townsend, Quil Ceda Village, San Juan County (Unincorporated), Seattle, Shoreline, Snohomish, Tacoma, Thurston County, and Tumwater have all banned plastic bags throughout their counties and/or municipalities

Therefore, the ASWWU:

1. Advocates for a statewide ban on single use plastic bags
2. Supports the passing of [SB 5323](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5323&Year=2019&Initiative=false) and [HB 1204](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1204&Initiative=false&Year=2019)

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/great-pacific-garbage-patch/>

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/environment-and-natural-resources/plastic-bag-legislation.aspx>

<https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/plastics-material-specific-data>

**Considerations for Presenters**

* Describe the issue: What is the problem? What is the solution?
* Does it directly impact and improve students’ lives?
* Can you provide background information and the current context of the issue?
* Does it have a clear target? (e.g. a specific legislator, committee, or other agency)
* Will it strengthen and expand efforts within WSA?
* Could students build a diverse campus coalition around this issue?
* Does it have a local/state/federal organizing and lobbying angle?
* Are students at Western engaged and interested in this issue? If not, what tactics could we employ to mobilize students around this issue?

**Please be sure to ask if any questions come up regarding the issue selection process.**

**Contact Associated Students Director of Legislative Affairs: Bennett Massey-Helber at** [**ASLegislativeLiaison@wwu.edu**](mailto:ASLegislativeLiaison@wwu.edu) **with any questions**

**Considerations for the Committee**

This section is comprised of questions the Legislative Affairs Council should keep in mind while considering proposals

* Is it winnable?
* Does it have a clear and realistic time frame?
* Is it likely to be debated and acted upon by the Legislature in the next year?

**Next Steps and Timeline of Proposal Proces**s

* Please arrive to the LAC meeting at which you are presenting on time, with your materials ready
* 20 minutes allotted for each presentation including questions

Fall:

* Preliminary discussion of proposals in LAC meetings
* Presentation, review and voting on legislative proposals by the Board of Directors
* Compilation of Legislative Agenda
* Crafting statements for Agenda Handouts
* Finalizing Handouts and approval by the Board of Directors

1. <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/plastics-material-specific-data> [↑](#footnote-ref-32156)
2. <http://www.wmnorthwest.com/guidelines/plasticvspaper.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-16569)
3. <https://www.nrdc.org/media/2008/080109> [↑](#footnote-ref-3969)
4. <https://media.nationalgeographic.org/assets/file/gpposter.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-14676)