



Testimony of Sergio Cahueque, Organizer at Defend Our Health  
In Support of LD 474, “An Act to Establish a Stewardship Program  
for Primary and Rechargeable Batteries”  
Before the Environment and Natural Resources Committee  
February 25, 2026

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Sergio Cahueque and I am an organizer at Defend Our Health. Defend Our Health’s mission is to make sure that everyone has equal access to safe food and drinking water, healthy homes and products that are toxic-free and climate friendly. I am here to testify in support of LD 474, “An Act to Establish a Stewardship Program for Primary and Rechargeable Batteries”.

We are in full support of requiring producers to participate in a statewide take-back program of primary (single-use) and small-to-medium format rechargeable consumer batteries in order to protect the environment and people from toxic chemicals.

According to the EPA “Batteries are manufactured using different mixtures of chemical elements designed to meet customers’ power and performance needs. Batteries can contain metals such as mercury, lead, cadmium, nickel and silver, which can pose a threat to human health or the environment when improperly managed at the end of their service life. Some batteries may also contain materials such as cobalt, lithium and graphite that are considered critical minerals by the United States Geological Survey. Critical minerals are raw materials that are economically and strategically important to the United States and have a high supply risk potential and for which there are no easy substitutes. Consequently, every effort should be made to recycle and recover these materials to ensure they will be available for generations to come.”<sup>1</sup>

Chronic exposure to battery chemicals can lead to serious health problems. Lead exposure from lead-acid batteries may cause brain damage, kidney harm, reproductive issues, behavioral problems, memory loss, and high blood pressure. Cadmium from nickel-cadmium batteries is toxic and can result in kidney damage and cancer. Long-term inhalation of toxic gases from lithium-ion batteries, such as phosgene, can damage the lungs and other organs.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/used-household-batteries#:~:text=Batteries%20are%20manufactured%20using%20different,end%20of%20their%20service%20life.>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.large-battery.com/blog/health-concerns-with-batteries-types-risks-and-safety/#:~:text=You%20may%20encounter%20several%20acute,populations%20to%20address%20health%20impacts.>



So, in short, requiring producers to support recycling and proper handling of used batteries would keep these heavy metals and toxic materials out of landfills and out of the environment, and will support the reuse of important finite material.

This is why I urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 474.

Thank you.