



ALLIANCE *for the*
GREAT LAKES

Proponent Testimony - Ohio House Bill 643 (Rep. Lang & Rep. Lipps)

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Good morning Chairman Young, Vice Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan and members of the committee. My name is Crystal M. C. Davis and I am the Ohio based Policy Director for the Alliance for the Great Lakes (The Alliance). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of HB 625.

From avid boaters and coastal business owners to the citizens who rely on their tap for clean water, Lake Erie is the unifier that brings all Ohioans together. Our state's economy, health and future depends on our ability to protect and preserve our greatest natural resource. Toxic harmful algal blooms created by agricultural pollution plague the western basin of Lake Erie and need immediate attention. At the Alliance, we are committed to supporting policy, community and business solutions that protect our lakes from source to tap. Each year, our Adopt-a-Beach™ volunteers collect thousands of items from the shores of the Great Lakes. In 2017, over 14,000 volunteers collected over 35,000 pounds of trash. An astonishing 89% of those items were partially or fully comprised of plastic. These items include not only plastic bags but also plastic bottles, caps, food wrappers, and other disposable forms of plastic.

Research studies have estimated that U.S. citizens use approximately 330 disposable plastic bags a year per person.¹ These disposable bags can cause environmental and social problems including the accumulation of unsightly litter on our shores and in our neighborhoods, clogging storm drains in our streets, and degrading into countless microplastics in Lake Erie that can enter the food web.

We believe that local governments should have the authority to impose bag fees which will discourage the use of plastic bags and auxiliary containers. Limiting this power ties the hands of local lawmakers and removes a key tool aimed at plastic reduction. For this reason, we oppose HB 625 and urge the committee to reconsider this approach. Chairman Young, we thank you for the opportunity to submit opponent testimony on HB 625.

¹ Clapp, Jennifer & Swanston, Linda. (2009). Doing away with plastic shopping bags: International patterns of norm emergence and policy implementation. *Environmental Politics - ENVIRON POLIT.* 18. 315-332. 10.1080/09644010902823717.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/248943601_Doing_away_with_plastic_shopping_bags_International_patterns_of_norm_emergence_and_policy_implementation