

**HB 242 - Municipal Preemption - Opposition Testimony**  
**Patti Doud**

Hello. My name is Patti Doud and I am going to be a senior at Westerville North High School.

As a student, I am encouraged to always ask questions and raise my voice when learning about a variety of things. Today, I am here to utilize my voice and urge my representatives to reject House Bill 242, due to the unconstitutional impediment the bill places on the rights of local governments, in addition to the negative impact it will have on the environment.

It can be daunting to think about the effect of each harmless single-use plastic every time we consume them. However, this mentality has accumulated in American society, and caused detrimental harm to our Earth. Plastic bags, for example, were created only 50 years ago, but over 500 billion bags are used per year; enough to encircle the globe 4,200 times. And while 60,000 plastic bags are consumed every 5 seconds, they never actually break down in landfill sites due to a lack of oxygen and sunlight. Additionally, the massive amounts of nonrenewable resources that are used to produce and transport our convenient, single-use plastics completely dominate the amount of use we glean from them. Plastic bags are also incredibly hard to recycle due to their lightweight chemical makeup, mostly just causing machinery damage and blockages.

Recently, the AP Environmental Science classes at my school spent one, seven hour school day picking up litter on campus. We sorted and counted the trash we collected in order to get a sense of the true impact our community has on the environment. The final numbers showed that a whopping 62.5% of all litter was plastic, with over 100 plastic bags collected in this short period of time. In addition, over 600 pieces of food waste plastics were collected, which made up 38% of all trash accumulated.

But what's the big deal, right? I mean, we all know that trash is bad, and that we shouldn't litter, but why should we care where our plastic bags are going?

Well, when plastic and other harmful items are littered, it can run off into our water sources, typically making it all the way to our oceans. Sea creatures are prone to ingesting our plastic waste, which causes a process called bioaccumulation. When the smallest sea organisms accidentally begin eating the plastic in our oceans, it moves its way up the food chain until the plastic is permanently imbedded in the life cycle. Recent studies have shown that human ingestion of meat, especially seafood, has even led to our own consumption of the trash and plastic that we use.

It's estimated that by 2050, the oceans will contain more plastic than fish by weight. So by the time I am only 48 years old, the oceans that I have swam in all my life will contain more *plastic* than fish by weight. All single-use plastics that we consume contribute to this, as well as a dead area of the ocean called the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, which contains 1.8 trillion pieces of plastic that suffocate oceanic life in the region.

None of us are free from the responsibility that humankind has caused these sad realities. However, by allowing municipalities to act in their best interest and explore the potential of legislation, some areas are able to ease the burden of our waste generation.

Already, 32 countries, 3 states, and over 200 municipalities have enacted plastic bag bans with largely positive results. The European Union, in addition to Canada, are working to eliminate all single-use plastics in a short two year time period, demonstrating that America has lost a portion of its global leadership in regards to groundbreaking legislation. While my peers and I are very encouraged by these positive steps, it would simply be wrong to prohibit this option from Ohio

communities, especially when it is already in use in places like in Cuyahoga County and Bexley. House Bill 242 impedes on the powers of local government, which creates problems when municipalities attempt to specialize action and create legislation that fits their community best. It's very important to preserve the layered powers of American government, and to place emphasis on the significance of local work. The communities of Cuyahoga County and Bexley have given the younger generation hope for a bright, clean future, and it demonstrates that our leaders truly care about the type of society they are leaving to us. They are not only an example that we can learn from, but are also evidence of the way communities can learn, grow and overcome the huge obstacles of comfort and convenience when considering what is truly best for our world. Please don't take away the ability for these communities to lead the way and make changes in ways that make sense for them, their citizens and future generations. Thank you.