

**Written Testimony of Sante Ghetti
Vice President of Advocacy
Greater Cleveland Partnership**

**Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee
Senate Bill 222
Tuesday, November 12, 2019**

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Maharath, and Committee members, my name is Sante Ghetti and I serve as the Vice President of Advocacy at the Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP). On behalf of our membership, I am pleased to offer our support of Senate Bill 222 (SB 222)—which authorizes the use of auxiliary containers for any purpose and prohibits the imposition of a tax or fee on those containers. In addition, we urge lawmakers to further study how we might reduce the use of non-reusable auxiliary containers while preserving the economic vitality of our small business and retailer communities.

GCP is the largest chamber of commerce in the State of Ohio, representing more than 12,000 small, mid-market and large companies across Northeast Ohio. Our mission is to mobilize private sector leadership, expertise and resources to create jobs and leverage investment to improve the economic vitality of our region. We do that in many ways, including advocating on behalf of our region’s small businesses, which often face high administrative costs from complicated and ever-changing regulations.

When Cuyahoga County introduced and later passed an ordinance that would ban single-use plastic bags countywide, [GCP supported an amendment](#) to delay the implementation of the ban pending further examination. We recognize that while plastic bags are harmful to the environment, bans like these have the potential to drive up use of paper bags, which are economically and environmentally costlier to

produce. In the case of the Cuyahoga County ban, we were also concerned about the potential impact on retailers that make up our membership. For example, [Heinen's](#), a Cleveland-based, family-owned grocery store, could see costs for bags increase by \$2 million per year because of the switch to paper.

SB 222 would authorize Ohioans to use an auxiliary container for purposes of commerce or otherwise, effectively prohibiting bans, taxes, or fees on plastic bags. GCP is supportive of the bill both because of the potential unintended consequences on our retailer community, which could face steep administrative cost increases, and because the potential adverse impact on paper usage has yet to be fully explored. [Recent research](#) has shown that while bag bans in cities led to the use of fewer plastic bags, sales of garbage bags for uses like dog walking or trash bins skyrocketed, resulting in about 30% of plastic that was eliminated coming back in the form of thicker garbage bags. Research has also found that cities with plastic bag bans saw a rise in the use of paper bags, the production of which requires lots of water, toxic chemicals, fuel, and heavy machinery. In short, although bans do reduce nonbiodegradable litter, strictly banning plastic bags could increase greenhouse gas emissions and result in worse environmental damage in our region.

We owe a commitment to our small business and retailer communities—as well as to everyday consumers and families—to further study the potential environmental and economic impacts of local bag bans, fees, or taxes. Pending more conclusive evidence, GCP is supportive of SB 222, but we urge lawmakers to take the lead in further studying how we might reduce environmental harm from non-reusable auxiliary containers while preserving the economic vitality of our region's small business and retailer communities.

