



MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

Written Opponent Testimony — Senate Bill 222
Senate Local Government, Public Safety & Veterans Affairs Committee
December 3, 2019
William Murdock, Executive Director
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Maharath, and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety & Veterans Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to you today regarding the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's (MORPC) opposition to Senate Bill 222 (SB222).

My name is William Murdock and I am the Executive Director of MORPC. MORPC is a regional council of over 70 local governments across Central Ohio's rural, suburban, and urban areas. We provide programs, services, and funding related to transportation, land use, data, sustainability, and economic prosperity. MORPC's membership consists of cities, townships, counties, villages, and other government entities.

SB222 would prohibit a local governments ability to impose a tax, fee, assessment, or other charge on auxiliary containers or plastic bags. As an agency of local governments, we value the responsibilities and rights of local governments. MORPC also works to pursue sustainability solutions that protect and preserve our natural resources. Therefore, we oppose SB222.

Too often, some argue that the environment and the success of a local economy cannot be integrated. One is either for the economy or against the environment. This dichotomy is shortsighted and leads to poor public policy. In order to not only remain competitive but lead as a region we must continue to innovate and attract talent to our growing region. This means, good jobs, schools, and diverse housing options. It also means good parks, trails, and clean water.

Sustainable2050 is a MORPC program that supports our member communities' sustainability efforts through direct technical assistance, collaboration, and recognition. We work with Sustainable2050 communities to benchmark their sustainability efforts and track their progress in achieving their sustainability goals and objectives. Our work with these communities gives us an understanding of how all efforts make a collective impact on the quality of life in Central Ohio.

Cities like Bexley, a Sustainable2050 community, worked closely with the largest distributors of single use plastic bags, and came up with a joint solution that was agreeable to business partners, and that meaningfully improved the urban tumbleweed of plastic bags and the resultant negative impact to our waterways, wildlife, food stream, and human health. Furthermore, Bexley's solution incentivizes consumers to bring their own reusable bags, and ultimately leads to a lowering of costs for our grocery and other retailers. Local ordinances like Bexley's provide a valuable testing ground for innovative approaches to critical issues that face our region and state.

Reducing plastic bag use can mitigate harmful impacts to oceans, rivers, lakes, forests and the wildlife that inhabit them. It can also relieve pressure on landfills and waste management. About 200 U.S. municipalities have banned or taxed plastic bags, which has had largely positive outcomes. 32 countries have passed laws banning plastic bags.

To reiterate, this testimony is not requesting for a statewide ban of plastic bags, but simply to maintain the ability of local governments to do what they see is in the best interest of their community. By categorically denying a local governments ability to impose a tax or a ban, you are preventing innovative opportunities and solutions at the local level. We encourage you to let local governments continue to be policy laboratories and to consider the negative ramifications of SB222 and oppose the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written opponent testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact me, at 614-233-4101 or at wmurdock@morpc.org with any questions or whenever MORPC can be of assistance.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Murdock". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William Murdock, AICP
MORPC Executive Director