

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SB 222. My name is Molly Ridge and I am a voter, an Ohio State University student, and most importantly a concerned citizen.

As you all know, Ohio is a home rule state. Cuyahoga county passed its own single use plastics ban and this bill threatens to nullify that legislation. I have always believed that regular people have an important voice in their government, but SB 222 is showing me that this unfortunately does not seem to be the case. Bills like this one are effectively invalidating the voices of the people by preventing local communities from passing law. This bill threatens local democracy, silences the voices of the people, and hinders economic growth and development.

While this bill says otherwise, I firmly believe that there is a growing demand for environmentally conscious practices and legislations, and economic benefits as well. The beautiful lakes and rivers that Ohioans take pride in are threatened by single use plastic and the problem is only compounded as more is inadvertently dumped each day. Ohio will lose out on tourism money if our waterways and landscapes are full of plastic. My father started a nonprofit organization to brand Cleveland as a waterfront city to bring tourism and economic growth back into the city. Imagine how initiatives like his will be damaged if our state and waterways are filled with single use plastics.

Countries like Canada, parts of China, and even Rwanda have put limits and bans on single use plastics. I would love to see Ohio as a leader among the states to reduce plastic use, but the proposal of SB 222 is prohibiting us from doing so. The tides are turning, and people are demanding less plastic in our world. The people of Ohio have made it clear that they will fight and vote for less plastics and they are asking for your support. As the government by and for the people it is now your turn to listen and respond. I urge you to let the wishes of your voters stand and reject SB 222.