

Chair Manning, Vice Chairman Brenner, Ranking Member Maharath and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety & Veterans Affairs Committee.

My name is Mary Ellen Berger and I live in Columbus, OH. I am submitting my opponent testimony on HB242. I would have preferred to testify in person at the hearing, but do not feel comfortable doing that with our current Covid health crisis. This committee is charged with protecting public safety, yet there was no guidance on current safety procedures for testifying at the statehouse. This is unacceptable. There isn't even anything on your website about Covid precautions. This needs to be addressed immediately. I also feel that there should be an option for people to testify remotely during this time.

I am strongly opposed to HB242, and testified against SB222 in December 2019. As the rest of the world is moving to address plastic pollution, this legislation would do the opposite. Cities, states and even countries are banning single use plastics. Once again Ohio is moving in the opposite direction.

The problem with plastic waste is that there is nowhere for it to go. China is no longer accepting plastic for recycling and cities and governments around the world are being forced to address this.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/11/world/china-recyclables-ban.html>

The majority of single use plastic is not even recyclable. It ends up in our landfills, our waterways and oceans, or incinerated and polluting our air.

There is growing public awareness to this crisis, with graphic photos of dead animals and waves of plastic washing up on beaches. What we don't see but are learning more about are the micro plastics that are in our water and now our bodies. This is a public health issue.

This committee is charged with reviewing legislation for local government and public safety issues. HB 242 would take away the ability for cities and communities to limit plastic waste. And who is charged with handling this waste? The cities! Who pays for this - the taxpayers do! Our landfills are overwhelmed with single use plastic that is not recyclable. How can you preempt communities from addressing plastic waste, when they are responsible for handling it? Less than 9% of plastic is recyclable, and only 2% is effectively recycled.

We all know how bad plastic is for our environment and our health so why would any legislator want to promote more single use plastic? Who is influencing legislators and promoting this bill? People are connecting the dots and realizing that the powerful plastic and petrochemical industries are behind this legislation. They want to protect their profits and promote more plastic, which they want to produce in Ohio from fracked gas. More people are learning about the proposed petrochemical hub and public opposition to this is growing. It impacts the people directly affected in Appalachia, but it threatens all of Ohio. We do not want the Ohio River Valley to become the next cancer alley, so petrochemical companies- and several foreign investors- can profit.

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/25022019/plastics-hub-appalachian-fracking-ethane-cracker-climate-change-health-ohio-river>

Ohioans do not want more plastic waste, or more fracking to create more plastic. We do not want a massive petrochemical hub in Ohio or cancer clusters, like those currently being investigated near frack sites in PA. We do not want contaminated water and toxic air pollution, or injection wells of contaminated fracking fluid all around our state (some of which have been shut down for causing earthquakes). We do not want more climate change and dangerous, extreme weather.

We expect you, as our elected legislators, to represent us, not corporate interests. We especially expect this committee to protect our health and safety.
Please vote no on HB242.

Thank you,

Mary Ellen Berger