

Testimony on House Bill 242
Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee

Submitted by:

Deborah K. Cooper

To: Chair Manning, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Minority Leader Maharath, and all members of the Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee.

House Bill 242 will harm our state by allowing single-use plastics to proliferate. It also sets a dangerous precedent by restricting the authority of local government officials and communities to tax themselves in order to address pollution and waste concerns. Ohio is a home-rule state, but HB 242 would threaten local democracy and violate our state's constitution.

The Ohio EPA Solid Waste Management Council estimates that Ohio has only 35.9 years of available disposal capacity. Even our best recycling efforts will not significantly reduce the amount of landfill waste. We are running out of room and time, and while we stockpile plastics, we are adding dangerous toxins to our planet.

We already know that fish and marine mammals are ingesting plastics, and we are eating those toxic fish. In addition, every year, plastics kill one million seabirds, 100,000 turtles, and 400,000 mammals.

Bags and other disposable plastics that remain on land will not degrade for at least 1,000 years. What will our grandchildren's future will look like if we fail to address this situation immediately? By ignoring this serious problem and trying to also prevent others from addressing it, legislators who support this bill are deliberately creating a toxic, unsustainable planet for their children grandchildren. Wouldn't you like to pass on a better legacy instead of allowing fossil fuel companies to call the shots and buy you off?

We know very well that we cannot depend on industries to police themselves and do what is best for the environment. We have seen, time and time again, that they tend to operate for short-term financial gain regardless of the longer-term consequences, and when our legislators allow them to continue ignoring the needs of our planet, we all suffer.

If Ohio legislators are not moved to address the environmental crises in our state and the world, then, at the very least, they should move out of the way so that those who do care can work to make the changes needed for the sustainability of our state and our world.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I hope you will consider my testimony even though the hearing is today (May 20). Unfortunately, the committee did not provide sufficient notice for testimony to be submitted.

Sincerely,

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