

May 19, 2020

Oppose HB 242: Prohibiting local governments from regulating disposable containers

Dear Chair Manning, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Minority Member Maharath and Members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee:

I am a concerned citizen who has been active for many years in a grassroots campaign to reduce plastic pollution in the city of Cincinnati. I am submitting testimony here in opposition to House Bill 242.

Manufacturers of plastic do need to turn a profit, and plastic has become very cheap to make and convenient to use. Yet Plastic containers are not as cheap to make if you figure in the hidden costs to human and environmental health.

According to the EPA, the U.S. generates more than *four million tons* of plastic bags every year. Plastic waste proliferates in the monumental gyres of garbage in the Pacific Ocean; it's in the bulging bellies of the fish we eat; it's killing our seabirds; it compromises our storm water systems, our landfills, our parks, our streets, our whole food chain! We consume plastic micro-fibers with every glass of water we drink!

In fact, Americans on average recycle just one percent of single-use plastic bags, with the remainder going to landfill or being released as deadly waste into our environment, our waterways and oceans. There they enter directly into our human food chain, kill fish, birds, and wildlife, contribute to litter, clog storm drains, create breeding sites for mosquitos and other pests, and generate costly problems for sanitary & stormwater sewer systems and recycling centers.

We know that single use plastics never fully biodegrade in landfills. Instead they release microplastic fibers that slip through purification systems undetected, and contain harmful carcinogens, endocrine disrupters, and may contain other toxic contaminants that are adverse to human health and damaging to ecosystems such as lead, cadmium, and mercury (<https://ecologycenter.org>)

Hundreds of cities and countries around the world are banning the use of single-use plastic shopping bags. Ohio needs to take the lead in finding a way to work together – citizens, corporations, and governments – to reduce the amount of plastic we sell and use. This will naturally involve necessary modifications in human behavior. Now, during this time of pandemic, we are learning to make needed cultural adaptations so that we all can benefit from a more sustainable and more resilient world.

Finally, House Bill 242 would prohibit municipalities, townships, and charter-government counties from using their home rule authority, if they so choose, to resolve solid waste problems associated with disposable containers.

I am asking this committee to oppose HB 242.

Thank you,

Jeanne Nightingale
Woman's City Club of Greater Cincinnati
League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area
Past Plastic Coalition Cincinnati