

5/15/2018

Chairman Dave Burke
Senate Committee on Health, Human Services and Medicaid
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215
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RE: Oppose SB 210

Dear Chairman Burke, Vice Chairman Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares and Members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee:

Good Afternoon. My name is Natalie Pax and I am a current student at The Ohio State University studying Environmental Policy and Decision Making, and I am an intern at Sierra Club as part of the Beyond Dirty Fuels Campaign.

I am here to speak in opposition of the proposed SB 210 that aims to suppress the power of local governments by preventing them from placing a fee on single-use plastic products such as bags and bottles. When state legislators prevent local communities from passing laws and policies specific to that area, they threaten the freedom and voice of the people, which is a cornerstone of the United States constitution. While this bill restricts the ability of local governments to implement fees to reduce plastic waste at its source, it does not propose any such measure from the state to reduce waste and prevent pollution.

Pollution from single-use plastic containers and products is an increasingly disconcerting issue that not only affects human health, but also threatens environment and wildlife health. According to the Center for Biological Diversity, 10 metric tons of plastic fragments, such as straws, grocery bags, and bottles, are carried into the Pacific Ocean every day. Not only are the world's oceans threatened by microscopic plastic pollution, but so too are Ohio's streams, rivers, and groundwater sources. Not only do plastic fragments affect the surrounding wildlife and environment, but chemicals from plastic can be absorbed by the body and have been found to alter hormones and have other detrimental health effects.

The implementation of SB 210 would limit local communities' choices to limit the distribution of single-use plastics, and would further aggravate the widespread pollution from plastic products. Communities, cities, townships, and other forms of local government should not be restricted in their ability to pass local laws and place fees on plastic products.

As I was on a walk the other day through my neighborhood in Columbus Ohio, I couldn't help but notice the plastic grocery bags caught in the branches of nearly every tree along the roadway. I don't know about you, but I don't dream about a future filled with plastic-ridden trees. I don't envision a future in which there are more pieces of plastic than flowers in my garden. And I don't think anyone envisions a future in which our oceans become so trash-ridden that every other form of marine life is overcome by the plastic we have produced.

It is time to envision a future without the pollution from single-use plastics, and this starts at the most basic level of local governments. Local communities deserve the right to pass laws and fees in order to limit the distribution of harmful plastics.

As your constituent, I strongly urge you to vote “no” on SB 210. Thank you so much for your time.