

February 13, 2020

From: Elaine Giessel,
Conservation Chair, Kansas Chapter, Sierra Club Chair, Kanza Group of the Kansas Chapter (covering the eastern counties of Kansas)

To: Rep. Sean Tarwater, Chair; Rep. Ken Corbet, Vice Chair, and Rep. Stan Frownfelter, Ranking Minority Member of the KS House Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development Committee

RE: HB 2625 Prohibiting the Regulation of Single-Use Plastic Items by Municipalities

I urge you to oppose efforts by industry to prevent local municipalities from dealing with problems related to the growing use and disposal of "single-use" plastic products.

It is no accident that this legislation is being fast-tracked as Prairie Village, Wichita and Lawrence are exploring ways to address the problems associated with single use bags in their cities. Other cities, states and nations have already taken steps to reduce disposable plastics at their source with significant success.

While the Kansas Chamber of Commerce is indicated as the sponsor, this is clearly an industry effort to keep local communities from addressing serious problems with the disposal of non-reusable, and often, non-recyclable materials. They entangle our sorting systems, contaminate our potentially valuable recyclables, clog machinery in and decrease the lifespan of our landfills, litter our landscapes, are consumed by livestock, endanger wildlife and ultimately end up polluting our waters which are sources of drinking water, food and recreation.

As a marine scientist, I have real concerns about the environmental impacts of the manufacture and disposal of single-use plastics on our ocean ecosystems. We know that microplastics are getting into marine food chains and can now be found in the deepest, most remote ocean trenches.

Communities should not have efforts to protect their environment thwarted by state legislators acting on behalf of the national petrochemical and plastics industries. All options need to be available if locally elected officials are going to be able to craft solutions best for their own constituents.

HR 2625 is nothing more than an attempt to limit home rule by special interest groups. I hope that you will not move it out of committee and will oppose any future measures that would prevent us from addressing the growing problem of plastics pollution.

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