

To: The Senate Commerce Committee

From: JC Moore of Clearwater, KS

Date: February 17, 2022

Topic: Letter in Opposition to SB 493

On nice days, I often take walks around my neighborhood and, as I walk, I pick up trash and recyclables from along the streets. Most days, I fill a small trash bag with discarded aluminum cans and single use plastic items such as straws, plastic knives and forks, food containers, and plastic bottles of all types. Some of it can be recycled but much of it has to go in the trash. Much of the single use plastics items not picked up by anyone, so they are just litter.

Strangely, I very seldom find plastic bags along the streets. When it is windy, as it usually is, I have seen them float high in the air. They end up on fences, in the tops of trees, in storm drains, in fields, or in any body of water nearby. Upon one occasion, I caught plastic bag while fishing. Plastic bags are a very special kind of problem as they cannot be put in with the normal curbside recycling. A few stores take them, but only about 12% are actually recycled. There are many alternatives to using plastic grocery bags. Braums uses all paper bags and Aldis does not provide bags at all, so people use boxes or bring their own bags.

Though each plastic bag does not weigh much, it is estimated that 92 billion plastic bags are used in the United States each year. That is about 1.1 billion pounds of plastic bags. Not only do they add about \$800 million to retail grocery prices - most of them end up in landfills, being incinerated, or scattered across the landscape. Animals often ingest plastic when they eat food thrown away in plastic bags. Plastic bags also end up in places they shouldn't be, such storm drains, sewage treatment plants, or even in a cow's stomachs. It has been reported that, at slaughter, it is not uncommon to find plastic materials inside cattle's stomachs. Enzymes in a cow's stomach have been found to break down some kinds of plastics, but not polyethylene which is the main component of plastic bags

Plastic bags make up only a small amount of the single use plastic litter that cities must deal with. Each city or municipality has different ways of treating sewage, disposing of trash, recycling, and cleaning up litter. It would be best if each city could develop its own unique regulations for using and disposing of plastic waste. SB 493 would not let that happen.