

SB 47
Opposed

Dear Madam Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee on Commerce,

Thank you for reading my testimony today. I appreciate your attention.

Please vote NO on Senate Bill 47.

I am a native Kansan and a native Wichitan. I was born here in 1958 and have lived here all my 64 years. I often meet people who have moved here from other states and they are horrified by the amount of single-use plastic they find in our community.



For the past three years, I have served on a City of Wichita Task Force to study the effects of single-use plastic on our city in addition to establishing Bag Free Wichita which has hundreds of followers. Our findings were that the people of Wichita support restrictions on single-use plastic bags. When performing a litter study in 2021 with the Hugo Wall Environmental Finance Center at Wichita State University, we found the majority of litter we picked up was single-use plastics.

The City of Wichita would save money not needing to clean out their storm sewers, not fishing bags and other single use plastics out of the Arkansas River and, believe it or not, not straining plastic bags out of their wastewater treatment. Yes, people flush plastic bags! The photo on the left is at our wastewater treatment plant in 2020.

The question here, is whether you support Article 12, Section 5(b) of the Kansas Constitution which stipulates that *"Cities are hereby empowered to determine their local affairs and government..."* and Section 5(d) reiterates that *"Powers and authority granted cities pursuant to this section shall be liberally construed for the purpose of giving to cities the largest measure of self-government."* You must understand that enacting SB 47 would remove the right of home rule for every city across this state which violates our state Constitution.

Our City Council knows what is best for our city and our city alone. Each city is deciding what will work for them. Every Kansas city knows what it needs and how to meet those needs. You must not take that right away.

The City of Wichita knows how to dispose of their waste and spends thousands upon thousands of dollars a year doing so. With you taking away our ability to govern ourselves, our City Council will be unable to make decisions that are best for the people who live here or save the city money when dealing with single-use plastics.

Struggling small Kansas towns are dealing with their own waste in their own ways. Only the people there know what is best for themselves. Only their governing body knows what is best for their city. Do not take that Constitutional right away from our Cities and Towns. Home Rule allows each municipality to self-govern what they decide to do with their waste, you must not try to prohibit each town from doing what is best after studying the effects and the costs.

Limiting single-use plastic saves money as small business owners would no longer have to provide "free" bags and cups and all else that drives up their overhead. Most drinks cost more for the cup than the drink! This could be a cost saving measure for stores and businesses all over our state and benefits any city that decides to restrict single-use containers.

Each store, even large ones like Dillons and Walmart, order their own consumables like register tape, deli containers, toilet paper and plastic bags. They already adjust what they purchase for the city and state they are in. That they will be unable to manage regulations is not a legitimate argument.

Limiting single-use plastic and specifically bags, is a good way to reduce the cost of our trash and our recycling. You may not know but a single plastic bag drives up the cost of our recycling when the bag gets accidentally caught up in the machinery by an unsuspecting citizen. The recycling machine must be taken apart, broken down, to find the bits and pieces of such bags. Then they have to be thoroughly cleaned and reassembled and then started back up. This can take much of the day and drives up the cost to all citizens when this happens.

I ask again, please respect the Kansas Constitution and Constitutional Local Control, and **vote NO on SB 47**. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

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This photo is from a collection of trash at 47th St. S and I-235 in Wichita. You can see the magnitude of single-use plastics problem in the largest city in Kansas.

