

January 30, 2024

To: Chairman Mike Thompson and Honorable Members of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee
From: Melinda Lewis, Prairie Village, KS homeowner and voter
Re: Written-only testimony opposing HB 2446

As a Kansan concerned about the effects of plastic pollution on our current and future environment and community well-being, I am opposed to HB2446. I hope the Kansas Legislature will continue to allow local communities to chart their own ways forward, in the effort to reduce plastic waste and respond to citizens' environmental priorities. These citizen-led efforts reflect the best of our state—engaging neighbors, putting children's needs first, listening to the evidence. For the past few years, I have volunteered with students whose worries about the climate have led them to convince their schools to find alternatives to single-use plastic. Elementary students even asked their PTA to avoid plastic water bottles in their school holiday parties. As adults, we should be inspired by kids' willingness to make changes today, in pursuit of a healthier tomorrow.

I oppose HB2446 as an overreach of state authority that would undermine local government. Kansas' Constitution gives cities power to determine their local affairs and grants "the largest measure of self-government". These provisions require that cities be allowed to decide our own futures.

I specifically oppose HB2446 because it would block communities' exploration of local efforts to address the pollution of single-use plastic products. While my city does not have an ordinance that would be overturned by this legislation, we do have many citizens involved in discussions about the environmental policies we want—including conversations about ways to reduce single-use plastic and prevent plastic pollution from harming our health and our natural environment. These efforts should be allowed to continue, especially as we learn more about the costs of plastic waste to our city's waste management today and to our community's future environmental sustainability.

If you spend time with many young people, you'll likely hear alarming statistics about the harmful effects of plastic bags, which last for centuries in landfills, add to greenhouse gases warming the planet, and—especially devastating for many kids—end up in sea turtles' stomachs. As we grapple with these consequences and the urgent costs of clean-up and landfill storage, communities should retain our powers to decide how to allocate our resources and protect our future.

I urge you to reject HB2446, to continue to allow local communities to determine our own policies about the products we will allow. Thank you for your consideration and your service.

Sincerely,



Melinda Lewis
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