



The Pennsylvania Municipal League

William Peduto, Mayor, City of Pittsburgh, *President*
Richard J. Schuettler, *Executive Director*

A Century of Commitment

To: Members of the House Consumer Affairs Committee

From: Amy Sturges, Director of Governmental Affairs, PA Municipal League

Re: Opposition to House Bill 1071 (PN 1270)

Date: April 17, 2017

On behalf of the members of the PA Municipal League, I write in opposition to House Bill 1071 scheduled for Committee consideration on April 18. The bill prohibits local governments from imposing a local ban, fee, surcharge or tax on recyclable plastic bags at the point of sale.

We are opposed to this bill on the principle that local, municipal autonomy is being pre-empted on an issue that is not even occurring, to our knowledge, in Pennsylvania.

However, regardless of whether local bans or fees are being implemented, if an elected governing body wishes to incentivize the use of re-useable bags, promote less waste in landfills and promote less trash on roadsides, it should be afforded the autonomy to make that decision. If constituents don't support such a measure, the public meeting process and ballot box are two options for the constituents to voice their disapproval.

Moreover, many municipalities in Pennsylvania are mandated to provide recycling programs. If a municipality chooses to promote recycling by banning or charging a fee for plastic bags, the Commonwealth should view this as a positive, innovative way to manage an unfunded mandate.

Finally, the bill distinguishes between political subdivisions and retailers and would continue to permit retailers to charge such a fee, or not offer plastic bags at all. We don't understand the differentiation. If a large retail chain decided to embrace an environmentally friendly stance and charge for plastic bags or not offer them at all, more manufacturing and recycling jobs would be impacted that would ever be by the number of political subdivisions adopting the same.

As this bill comes before you, we ask for a negative vote. Thank you for your consideration.