

CITY OF BOZEMAN TESTIMONY
Natalie Meyer
House Local Government Committee
02-14-2023

Good Afternoon, Chair Brewster and Local Government Committee Members, My name is **Natalie Meyer (M-E-Y-E-R)**, I am the Sustainability Program Manager for the City of Bozeman. Thank you for the opportunity today to testify in **SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 413** on behalf of the City of Bozeman.

Last session, the State legislature chose to add many new provisions to the powers denied to self-governing entities in Montana. One addition to the list of powers denied was limiting local government's ability to regulate auxiliary containers, such as plastic bags.

Plastic bag fees have yielded success in several cities across the United States and around the world. The additional fee is often small, maybe five or ten cents per bag. However, it does make a difference in consumer choice habits. Other cities have shown a reduction of 72% in plastic bag usage upon implementing the fees.¹

As others have stated, plastic bags can take up to 1,000 years to breakdown in a landfill where they degrade into microplastics that we cannot see and quietly harm human health. The reliance on plastic bags started in the US just 40 years ago² and today we

¹ <https://www.gwhatchet.com/2018/02/07/district-tax-leads-to-sharp-decrease-in-plastic-bag-use/>

² <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/birth-ban-history-plastic-shopping-bag>

cannot escape microplastic pollution, even in the most pristine lakes and rivers in Montana³. By continuing our reliance on plastic bags, we are passing on the burden of these containers to our children, their children, and many, many generations of Montana children beyond that.

The City of Bozeman supports this legislation because it will allow individual cities and towns and their constituents to make the right decision for their own communities rather than requiring every city to conform to a one-size-fits-all approach.

Thank you Chair Brewster and members of the Local Government Committee for hearing my testimony **SUPPORTING HOUSE BILL 413** today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have and urge a do pass.

³ <https://www.umt.edu/news/2022/06/062222flbs.php> and <https://environmentamerica.org/montana/center/resources/microplastic-in-montana/>