

Your submission to Proposed mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags

Terrina Helliwell

Reference no: 216

Submitter Type: Individual

Clause

1. Do you agree with the proposed mandatory phase out of the sale or distribution of single-use plastic shopping bags in New Zealand, including those made of degradable (eg, oxo-degradable, biodegradable and compostable) plastic? Why / why not?

Notes

Mostly yes. However, I don't know enough about biodegradable plastics and whether there are any that can easily biodegrade down to non-toxic components in a normal environment. I think the phase out should be extended to include plastic packaged products in general so that supermarkets can start to resemble bulk food stores like bin inn.

Clause

2. We have proposed a mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags. This could include under 50 microns or under 70 microns in thickness. If you agree with a mandatory phase out, which option do you prefer, and why?

Notes

I don't think even very thin plastic bags should be allowed. No plastic single use shopping bags at all. Sometimes thin is worse. For example, paper coated in very thin plastic might be so thin you don't realise it is plastic and then throw it in your compost or out the car window thinking it will degrade.

Clause

3. Are you aware of types of single-use plastic shopping bags that should be exempt from a mandatory phase out?

Position

Not sure

Notes

I get a bit confused. Some plastic says it is 'biodegradable' when it actually still degrades down to some toxic components. This seems dishonest.

Clause

4. Do you currently manufacture, sell, provide or import for sale or personal use these types of single-use plastic shopping bags:

Position

No

Notes

Clause

5. Should smaller retailers be exempted from a mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags? Why / why not?

Position

No

Notes

No way.

Clause

6. If smaller retailers are exempted from a mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags and they are defined by their number of full-time equivalent employees, what should that number be?

Notes

N/A

Clause

7. The proposed mandatory phase-out period for single-use plastic shopping bags is at least six months from when regulations are Gazetted, subject to consultation. Do you agree with this timing?

Position

Not sure

Notes

Clause

8. Do you agree that the benefits expected from implementing a mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags exceed the costs expected from implementing the phase out? Why / why not? Please consider both monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits (those that can be measured by money as well as those that can't).

Position

Yes

Notes

Yes - phasing out single use shopping bags should certainly occur. We need to move to a waste system where retailers cannot sell items in single use packaging where the packaging cannot even break down into non toxic substances when released into the environment.

Clause

9. Do you think that reasonably practicable alternatives to single-use plastic shopping bags exist in New Zealand? Why / why not?

Position

Yes

Notes

Yes, definitely. I think we should go a step further and investigate phasing out plastic packaging for food products in general.

Clause

10. How can people be encouraged to reuse multiple-use shopping bags enough times to offset the environmental impacts of producing them? (select one or more)

Position

national information campaign and mobile phone app for shoppers

Notes

I would certainly support a nation-wide campaign.

Clause

11. What would help you and your family adjust to life without single-use plastic shopping bags?

Notes

I don't use single-use shopping bags.

Clause

12. How can data on single-use plastic shopping bags and other single-use plastics entering the market and monitoring of reductions be improved?

Notes

Perhaps people who distribute / sell /use single use plastics as a part of a business have to be registered in a system, just like people who buy/sell food have to be registered. Then they have to have an inspector check out their premises and systems to see that they are taking the appropriate steps to minimize their plastic use and, in particular, minimise the amount of plastic that can even leave the premises.

Clause

13. Please provide any additional comments or suggestions about the proposed mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags.

Notes

Phase out single use plastic in general, not just shopping bags. If you cannot sell an item without packaging it in plastic then one must ask whether you should be selling that product at all.