

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

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Reference no: 274

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?

Position

Yes

Notes

I think the use of biodegradable/compostable plastic should be continued, as long as strict regulatory standards are set as to what defines biodegradable/compostable. The environmental costs of paper/cloth alternatives are higher than degradable/compostable plastics, and non-plastic alternatives may be too difficult for independent business owners as well.

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?

Position

less than 70 microns in thickness

Notes

Clause

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

Position

Yes

Notes

Clause

3a. If yes, what are they and why should they be exempt?

Notes

Degradable/biodegradable/compostable - they are still more economic and environmentally friendly than some other options such as paper & cloth. They are also more easily accessible for citizens who may rely on some form of plastic for whatever reason.

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, but the option of switching to biodegradable/compostable plastic should be preserved. These are relatively easy and cheap to source. The higher price point that single-use will also encourage small retailers to not over-supply stores or hand out too many bags to customers. Plus, consumers of single use plastic who don't agree with the ban will just go to small retailers and grab extra ones for their use.

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

5 or less.

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

Yes

Notes

Better than never doing it!

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

Our first duty is to the planet and all its citizens, humans and non-humans. A phase out is better for us in long term, as it will also encourage innovative ways of reducing plastic overall.

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

There is a large, easily available selection of non-plastic alternatives such as canvas, jute and hemp. The supermarkets' inhouse plastic reusable bags are also a decent option as they can be recycled through soft plastics. Degradable/compostable plastics are not as easy to find but a phase out should make these more accessible as suppliers and manufacturers switch over.

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**Clause**

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

Notes

We already live without single-use plastic wherever possible, and exclusively use reusable bags since 2016.

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

Regulate suppliers, ensure that they are releasing all the information on how many people are purchasing single-use plastic, for what purpose and how this changes over time.

Clause

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

Notes

This is a great idea. There will be opponents who believe it won't work, but we need to start somewhere. We will not invest time and energy into devising environmentally friendly alternatives until the single-use bags are gone. Choking our planet with single-use plastics will continue infinitely unless nations like ours continue to step up and lead the way.