

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

Reference no: 5550

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

No

Notes

Because plant based alternatives (particularly given our current lack of composting infrastructure across municipalities in NZ) are as environmentally hazardous as fossil-fuel, polymer-based SUPBs.

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

Other (please specify)

Notes

All polymer-based plastic bags.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

All SUPBs should be banned, particularly the thicker options which take longer to break down (more likely to cause physical harms to fauna) and contain more fossil fuels, use more energy to produce, and contain a higher volume of toxins (as colorants and plasticisers).

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

Because the plastic bags distributed by smaller retailers have the same environmental and human health impacts of larger retailers.

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

They should not be exempt

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

No

Notes

More time may be needed to build in the subsidization of robust, long-life, plastic-bag alternatives for those who struggle to invest in these - particularly in cases when householders must purchase weekly shopping for large/extended families on minimum wage.

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

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

Groups such as Boomerang Bags and groups in Whāingaroa/ Raglan gather as a community to make bags for supermarkets which people borrow and return. Subsidising these types of community-based schemes could provide occasion for community-building, upskilling of people and also durable alternatives to plastic bags (e.g. could be funded through Plastic Free July initiatives).

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

Can't select more than one here. Last two. Subsidised SUPB alternatives for low income families.

Clause

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

Notes

Subsidies/Free robust plastic-free bags. Financial support for community bag-making workshops. Reminder signage in supermarket and retailer parking areas and on shopping trolleys and baskets. Relaxing of laws on reusable bags - sometimes there are crazy health and safety rules but would be great if there was just a giant box on arrival at the supermarket where you could drop or pick up fabric 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

We don't have any so any would be better than nothing! A ban must include regular evaluation, monitoring, and public reporting (at least annually) by an independent agent (NOT the packaging forum!)

Clause

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

Notes

We would have preferred to have seen a longer phase out with a levy as has successfully been implemented in England, Scotland, N.Ireland and many other nations around the world. The independently managed funds would have been invaluable in building on our current soft plastics recycling scheme, in supporting clean-ups, in single-use educational programmes, and in R and D for sustainable packaging. However, given such an exceptionally short phase-out period, this is no longer an option. This would also have generated funds to subsidise low income families and time to develop a higher level of buy-in from retailers and consumers. Regardless, our position is that a ban is still much much better than the status quo and so we remain in full support. Support community fabric bag making workshops, funding to groups involved in Plastic Free July for novel community-based solutions to plastic free living.

You have elected to withhold your personal details from publication.