

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

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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

Yes I agree to a phase out of all single use bags because plastic bags pollute our oceans, kill wildlife and break down contaminating soil and water. Plastic bags are pollution.

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

The minimum micron level for an alternative plastic bag should be 70 microns as this mean that retailers will be more likely to choose bags which are genuinely reusable. Any bag less than 70 is likely to be treated as a single use bag by customers, and so will limit the change in consumer behaviour and increase the number of thicker bags going to landfill.

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

No single use bags of any material should be available for free in New Zealand. I support any schemes that make it possible to remove the cost barrier for low income families to adopt new habits of taking their own bags shopping, such as a free one-off provision of up to 10 reusable bags.

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

All degradable bags should be banned.

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 retailers should be exempt from the single use plastic bag ban as the alternatives are readily available and affordable for businesses of any size. New Zealand has many beachside communities with small dairies and takeaway shops. These kinds of retailers often provide single use bags for people wanting to picnic or eat takeaways on the beach where the likelihood of the plastic bag ending up in the environment is high. Consequently, exemptions for small retailers would be likely to lead to ongoing marine pollution.

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

There should be no exceptions.

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

The mandatory phase-out period for single-use plastic shopping bags should be as soon as feasible, allowing enough time for a public education campaign and for retailers to train their front-line staff.

Clause

7a. If no, what do you think would be a more appropriate phase-out period?

Position

two months

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**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**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

The government should run an information campaign to inform the public about the environmental impacts of different reusable bags, as well as education campaigns about alternative ways of lining bins and picking up dog poo.

Clause

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

Notes

in ensuring that all households have access to appropriate reusable bags, the government should support community-led projects that are producing reusable bags sustainably out of natural fibre or upcycled materials (i.e. Boomerang Bags/kete making)

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

Retailers should be required to provide collated data on single use plastics as part of a mandatory product stewardship scheme for single use plastics and packaging. Targets for reductions over time should be set and tracked.

Clause

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

Notes

this consultation is a great start, but I hope it represents the beginning of central government's willingness to use the Waste Minimisation Act to help NZ reduce its waste, and not the end. Section 23 could also be used to ban/regulate other single-use plastics, we could also use part 2 of the Act to set up mandatory product stewardship for packaging, and we could use s 23 or mandatory product stewardship to institute a nationwide bottle deposit scheme.