

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

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Reference no: 6236

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

Single use plastic is a major source of pollution in rivers and the ocean. Regulation is needed to shift from a linear to a circular economy. Using something once and then discarding it can no longer be accepted as the norm. Degradable bags also need to be included in the phase out as they still reinforce the notion that single use is ok and also there is no guarantee they will be consistently disposed of in a way that will ensure the conditions required for full degradation will actually occur.

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

Having a specified thickness could enable manufacturers and retailers to circumvent the ban through providing single-use bags just above whatever threshold is established. Any threshold thickness would need to ensure it would be economically unfeasible for manufacturers and retailers to provide thicker single-use bags. Careful consideration needs to be given to the establishment of any thickness criterion to ensure the goal of banning single use plastic bags is actually achieved in practice.

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

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

Smaller retailers should not be exempt as they collectively contribute significant numbers of single use plastic bags to the waste stream. An incomplete ban would dilute the effectiveness of the behaviour change effect of the ban on consumers. A ban should also apply to those importing single use plastic bags.

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

Smaller retailers should not be exempt as they collectively contribute significant numbers of single use plastic bags to the waste stream. An incomplete ban would dilute the effectiveness of the behaviour change effect of the ban on consumers.

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

Yes, although it shouldn't be significantly greater than six months, as a six month period is sufficient time to enable retailers and consumers to prepare and adapt.

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

NZ relies on its clean, green 100% pure image for both trade and tourism. We need to ensure our environment and behaviours align with this brand positioning. A linear economy is not sustainable and we need to move to a circular one to enable efficient resource use to support an increasing population and meet our emissions reduction commitments. Using something once and then sending it to landfill can no longer be the norm and a ban on single-use plastic bags is a first step to achieving broader behaviour changes to achieve waste minimisation and efficient resource use outcomes.

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**

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

Notes

We've already adjusted. Key thing was to get into the habit of returning multiple-use bags to the car after we've emptied them. That way they are in the car ready for the next time we need to shop.