

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

Phase them out sooner.

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

Phase out all single use bags. Phase out all single use plastic packaging including wrapped produce, meat, and take out containers. Even when people actually do recycle there is often no actual affordable recycling technology and it ends up in land fill.

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

The implication of this question is that some should be exempt. This is a leading question. There may well be instances where plastic packaging seems the best or only alternative. I would like to have confidence that this was closely examined and alternatives are continually sought. This question undermines that confidence. What is the priority; environment, sustainability, pollution reduction or convenience, industry concerns, the inertia of the status quo?

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

Having less bags is only one step, having no bags is the goal. With a culture change to reusables, paper and no bag people will begin to learn not to expect bags. Having small retailers provide bags will undermine the efforts to create that culture change.

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

No Exemption.

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

Cut this to 3 months. Retailers and manufacturers will know well in advance that the change is coming and do not need 6 months. We have stalled on this far too long already.

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

The monetary costs of plastic bags has never been fully accounted for. What will it cost to remove plastic waste from the environment? Will we find it imperative to develop ways to remove micro plastics to preserve human and ecosystem health? We don't actually know. This makes an economic analysis invalid. This is true for the feared costs that a loss of plastic packaging for food distribution and preservation might entail. A analysis of all alternatives to plastics would need to include a full life cycle analysis of plastics and their alternatives. Add in chemical leaching of packaging material into the food, into the environment, impacts on workers from packaging production, to handling, shipping, retail, consumption, recycle/disposal, long term environmental impacts etc. There are too many unknowns for an economic analysis to have validity. We do know many of the impacts of plastics now. The sheer volume of single use plastics in our waste stream and environment are overwhelming. This is why the move to ban single use items has emerged. Where was the economic analysis of the impact single use packaging would have when it was introduced? There was none. Where was the environmental analysis of the impact of single use packaging and bags? There was none. We are now experiencing many of the negatives of that negligence. We need to rethink much of what we do and how we do it. In the interim a ban on single use bags and packaging is a risk worth taking. There will be consequences and adjustments. Let's get on with it. The experiment with single use has already produced overwhelming harm.

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

I have used the same home made cloth bags for over 30 years. I use net and light weight cloth bags for produce. It is not that hard. Stuff some in your transport mode and one is generally prepared. Most stores are happy to give away boxes when the need arises. Cotton cloth bags used to be used for flour and other powders. Burlap for many other items. No doubt we will develop more solutions if we remove the crutch of single use packaging.

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

(Only one may be selected) 1. Eliminate the lazy option of single use. 2. Price non plastic reusable bags cheaply at first. Let people know the price will go way up in future so hold onto them and reuse them. 3. Price reusable plastic bags high enough that people will not just toss them. 4. Phase out cheap reusable bag sales at check out so people learn not to rely on it.

Clause

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

Notes

For the most part have done this. To complete the task the option of single use bags and packaging need to be fully phased out.

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

BAN THEM. Sorry to yell, but this message has been known and ignored for decades. Cater to laziness and 'convenience', give in to manufacturers and the data will remain discouraging.

Clause

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

Notes

Do it. Do it now. Do it completely. Get on with moving us to a sustainable present and future. We need to spend a lot of resources already to clean up the mess left by single use packaging. More stalling means more mess and more work to be done.