

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

Reference no: 1093

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

Plastic bags have a significant negative impact on our environment through their production and disposal, and our environment is facing significant threats at the moment. We NEED to significantly reduce our waste and find more sustainable options for living. Getting rid of plastic bags will be an easier and effective step to doing this.

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

We should be phasing out ALL single use shopping bags, regardless of thickness, because they aren't necessary and there are many available alternatives.

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

It is a hugely important step and there are many cheap and accessible alternatives, and many smaller retailers have shown initiative in this, proving that it is easy and important to do.

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

3

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

It should be no more than six months, six months is an appropriate time for people to adjust, but many people have already been adjusting so I believe no more than six months would be necessary.

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

Absolutely. Our environment is under such significant threat at the moment that the benefits of reducing our impact on it in this way would greatly exceed the costs. Especially because society has already found and developed many accessible and cheap alternatives. While short term it may cost for some, the long term benefits will far exceed those costs.

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

Yes, reusable cotton or polyester bags, backpacks, and paper bags are some practical alternatives in New Zealand. Reusable cotton or polyester bags are already made available by supermarkets and other retailers. Boomerang bags is one initiative that provides practical alternatives to the public at no cost.

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

I think there has already been a large shift in society and many in the public already use their reusable bags extensively. People certainly need to be informed on the problem and the possible alternatives, to find what is right with them. Just removing the option of plastic bags certainly helps in encouraging it, I know this first hand after spending 5 months in the Netherlands where they have already phased out plastic bags, and not having that option pushed me into finally and completely kicking the habit of using single use plastic bags at supermarkets and in turn other retailers as I always remembered to take my bags. One thing to keep in mind with a potential national campaign is the use of backpacks - many of us have them and they are great to use instead of single use plastics in supermarkets and other retailers.

Clause

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

Notes

We have already adjusted! Learning about the importance of it, having supermarkets themselves selling reusable options, and as I said above living temporarily in the Netherlands where single use plastic bags weren't an option was incredibly helpful for me, and we definitely should do the same.

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 first step but I think we should take it further in banning plastic straws, retailers and individuals should have to turn to reusable options, and we should take big steps to reduce the use, and therefore sale, creation and disposal of plastic bottles - particularly plastic water bottles. They have a huge negative impact on our environment and in a country like New Zealand where we have easy access to clean water we should encourage reusable bottles for individuals, making this water more accessible in public spaces, and get sellers to package their water in more sustainable packaging to reduce their impact. This would be a huge challenge but one which I think would be more than worth tackling.

You have elected to withhold your personal details from publication.