

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

Matthew Baird

Reference no: 1167

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

It is very important that "degradable" bags as also included, as most people do not have any way of composting them, so they still end up polluting.

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

Should include all single-use plastic bags of any thickness. This should also cover heavier weight singlet bags, lightweight boutique bags, plastic produce bags, and so called "emergency bags" of any thickness.

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

As above.

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

This phase out should be applied across the board, no matter the size and staff level. This is the most comprehensive and fairest way to ensure the elimination of single-use plastic bags from our waste and environment. Single-use plastic bags are unsustainable, that doesn't change based on the size of a business.

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

I would hope it happens as soon as practical allowing for a phase out period. 6 months seems like the upper end of this timeline.

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

There is no compromise we can make for the health of our oceans and waterways. I'm struggling to see how there would be a monetary cost, as retailers won't have to supply single-use bags, and would pass that saving on to consumers.

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

We've been using reusable bags for years. Keeping a few in the car means we're never without. Reusable bags are already available in many shops.

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

There are many ways to help make this transition easy, such as leaving bags in your car, handbag, bike, pram, etc. Informing the public about these options and more will help ease the transition. Once it's a habit, it is really easy.

Clause

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

Notes

As above, we already avoid single-use plastic bags.

Clause

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

Notes

This is an important and great first step to reducing single-use plastic. I urge you to take advantage of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 to address other forms of single-use plastic such as cutlery, straws, and takeaway containers. I also encourage the government to:

- Introduce a container deposit scheme.
- Increase the Waste Disposal Levy to fund development of recycling infrastructure.
- Introduce mandatory product stewardship schemes so that manufacturers and retailers are responsible for addressing and dealing with the waste they cause, rather than expecting consumers and councils to deal with it.

Finally, I support the call by Greenpeace to work on a global strategy to reduce plastic pollution.