

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

Chris Abel

Reference no: 1862

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

- Because too often these bags end up in the environment, causing harm to marine life. - Because when they degrade they turn into microplastics which have a potential to harm fauna, and human health - because eventually humans need to phase out most if not all plastic and this is a good first step

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 thicker the bags are, the more likely they are to be successfully reused, less likely they are to break, and less susceptible to blowing away in the wind and become litter

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

They should all be banned; there are plenty of alternatives

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

To be effective, the bags should be banned from all retailers, regardless of size. There are alternatives, which will become cheaper as more people use them, and it will not take long for customer behaviour to change so that all single use bags become redundant

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

One

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

Clause

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

Position

two months

Notes

The sooner the bags are banned, the less harm there will be on the environment. People in New Zealand have already been forwarned about the potential ban, so there is no need to drag out the phase-out period

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 financial and convenience costs are miniscule when weighed against the environmental benefits of stopping the bags entering and harming the environment. People will adjust rapidly to life without the bags, whereas humans may be doing permanent harm to the environment by filling it with plastic

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

There are numerous alternatives to single use plastic bags: - multi-use bags already for sale at most supermarkets - when buying only a couple of items you can just carry the items in your hand - small backpacks that most people already own - cardboard boxes that a lot of supermarkets already provide for customers to use - people can make their own bags out of old t-shirts, sheets, other cloth items

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

Other (please specify)

Notes

Make the multiple use shopping bags more expensive to buy, so people have a strong financial incentive to reuse them

Clause

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

Notes

Nothing, we already do without single-use plastic shopping bags

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

Make stores log all single-use plastics that they sell. This will provide high quality data and be such a hassle that it will incentivise stores to stop selling single-use plastics

Clause

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

Notes

I think the phase-out is a brilliant idea, and is a good start on the road of removing most plastic from supermarkets, other stores, and eventually our entire lives aswell