

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

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Reference no: 326

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

Long overdue. Fully support this initiative and hope it will lead to even more steps to minimise the use of plastic and packaging which is causing so much harm to our environment

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

Total phase out

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

I think some smaller retailers have been more committed and responsible than larger ones. I don't think any retailers should be exempt as the problem requires urgent action from everyone. As soon as someone gets an exemption others start looking for loopholes.

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

Don't favour any exemptions so no point in answering this question

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

Would like it to be sooner. This problem of plastic pollution has been around and growing for a long time so people should not be surprised by this decision. If they are not prepared for it then that in itself indicates they need a 'push' to take action

Clause

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

Notes

The more time is given the more people drag the chain. Time to bite the bullet. Let's aim for end of 2018!

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. The environmental benefits are crucial and will be significant, not to mention the creative opportunities we have to develop and implement viable alternatives. After all plastic is a relatively recent invention which has tragically become a major problem just in my life-time. Many of the alternatives we used in earlier generations and these can be reclaimed and refined without us becoming Luddites!

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 is scope for even more creativity. Boomerang bags for example, only recently emerged at grassroots level as a result of the concern of ordinary people and dissatisfaction with producers and retailers who were not doing enough to tackle the problem. Necessity is indeed the mother of invention but until we are spurred into considering new alternatives many of us just settle for the status quo. It is high time our political leaders took this decision for the benefit of the planet as a whole

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

Unfortunately some people will only respond when their option to use plastic bags is taken away. This is why I favour a mandatory solution. We need to see this as a harm reduction issue not a freedom of choice one. There are times when the health and wellbeing of the environment must override the personal choices of human beings who have overlooked their responsibility to other species for far too long. I just hope the opposition of some sectors of society - be it big business or myopic individuals - does not cause our political leaders to waiver on this issue as seems to be the case in Australia. The more people see that alternatives can work and the more good stories are told the better, and the more people will be encouraged and inspired to make positive changes

Clause

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

Notes

We are already committed to this so the decision by Government to make this mandatory is great. However we hope it goes further in terms of tackling plastic packaging and other forms of pollution that are environmentally harmful.

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

Strategies need to be put in place to encourage and monitor retailers and producers. They should have to provide hard data and evidence on an annual or 6 monthly basis to show the steps they have taken, the alternatives they are providing, and hopefully the savings they are making over time.

Clause

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

Notes

I fully support this first step but it can only be seen as a first step in a long but necessary journey that must will lead to even more waste minimisation, reduction in the use of plastics and other harmful pollutants. The provision of plants to dispose safely of all the

existing plastic that already exists is another urgent component of this whole issue. I really support the promotion and implementation of the 6 'R's' that the zero waste movement advocates and would like to see this promoted more widely in schools and workplaces throughout Aotearoa/NZ.