

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

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Reference no: 350

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 an obvious first step towards reducing our excessive and harmful waste.

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

70 microns covers more bags. The more that is excluded, the more impact the legislation will have.

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

This legislation must be universal to send a message about what is acceptable in our society. Exempting small businesses says "it's only unacceptable if you've got the money to do it differently".

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

see above.

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

The sooner, the better.

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

This legislation needs to be seen as part of a wider picture and as a starting point. The wider picture of plastic pollution is one of long-lasting health and environmental damage. Cancer and infertility have been linked to toxins released by degrading plastics, which are now found in tiny particles everywhere, from our groundwater and our food. Our landfills are going to leach more of these chemicals for generations to come. Our disposal of plastic must be stopped as soon as possible. That means redesigning essential products and banning non-essential ones. It also means changing the disposable lifestyle. And that means changing the conversation, which this legislation has the potential to do. The benefits to future generations may be priceless. The legislation also needs to be flexible to include more single-use products (e.g. excessive packaging), non-recyclable products (e.g. tetrapaks) and the riskiest products (e.g. only BPA-free food packaging) at a later date. That way, the potential benefits can be maximised.

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 carry 4 nylon bags in my handbag. They are small and light and strong. They are plastic but I've had them for 10 years with little sign of wear. I also have 5 produce bags - I think plastic produce bags should also be banned in this legislation.

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

Reduce the production impacts: produce them from other waste e.g. recycled or upcycled fabric

Clause

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

Notes

What did help: the nylon bags, much smaller than the supermarket's reusable bags, these stuff into a little pouch that keeps them manageable.

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

Require manufacturers and importers to report

Clause

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

Notes

Please consider expanding the legislation to cover more than just shopping bags: plastic produce bags at least. Include other points that promote a zero-waste economy, such as a provision that explicitly allows shops to use the containers brought by customers without fearing legal health and safety repercussions. Have it also establish a towards zero-waste national standard that, for example, defines excessive packaging, sets out best practice for a circular economy, establishes a standard vocabulary that prevents greenwashing - even if they are only guidelines. And if not, just include a mandatory review of the products excluded by the legislation with the intention of increasing the exclusions for the reduction of pollution.