

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

Reference no: 393

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

Facilities for dealing with even (supposedly) biodegradable or compostable plastic are lacking in NZ. Single-use bags are a significant contributor to ocean and waterway pollution and litter in general; they are also not needed at all.

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

Phase out all of them - the thicker bags are even more 'unrecyclable' than the thinner ones (and won't be reused any more than the current thinner ones are).

Clause

3. Are you aware of types of single-use plastic shopping bags that should be exempt from a mandatory phase out?

Position

Not sure

Notes

None should be exempt if they are plastic and single-use. That includes produce bags which don't seem to have been mentioned specifically.

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

Because alternatives are widely available: e.g. reusable jute bags, initiatives like Boomerang bags, paper bags, reusable produce bags etc.

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

Much as I would like them gone right now, there are people who will find it harder to adjust to bringing their own bags or (for retailers) sourcing alternatives...habits take a while to change!

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

Plastic is cheap to make, but it's not sustainable long-term for the economy or the environment. The buyers for used plastic are more limited with China refusing to take our waste and landfills can't cope, leading to increasing disposal costs (if we can dispose of it at all!) and then there is the detrimental environment impacts (ocean creatures dying with stomachs full of plastic, plastic clogging up waterways and so on)

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

As mentioned earlier, cloth bags, jute bags, reusable produce bags, paper bags, as well as wrapping things in waxed paper or newspaper, byo containers. Potentially even plant-based plastic (but it would have to be home compostable to not end up in the same situation)

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

voluntary incentive schemes by individual retailers

Notes

(couldn't select one or more??). I think both a national information campaign and incentives would encourage people BUT the incentives have to be well advertised e.g. New World do a 5 cent discount per bag but many customers don't know about that as it's not well advertised, and its probably too small to make a difference to most people versus 'convenience'

Clause

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

Notes

We already have mostly. The main issue is remembering to take reusable bags or have them handy. I guess support for initiatives like Boomerang Bags and/or having something like a "bag run" to get poorer families started might help. Signs in stores and getting staff in habit of asking 'have you brought your reusable bag' would help, especially to start with.

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

No idea. I would assume all imports into NZ are monitored in some way, so an "at time of import" measure would be useful (especially from countries like China as ironically they continue to export excessively plastic-wrapped products while now refusing all the waste at the other end. In terms of monitoring reductions, I can't see anyone but the retailers themselves being able to track that.

Clause

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

Notes

As mentioned above, the phase out should include produce bags (which are also single-use, if not more single-use than the checkout bags). Otherwise, it's well overdue and I look forward to seeing them gone!

You have elected to withhold your personal details from publication.