

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

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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

Compostable bags generally only decompose in industrial composters, which NZ doesn't have. Other countries have successfully banned them for years, there's no solid reason why this cannot be done here with our tiny head of population.

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

It should cover all thicknesses of plastic. If you're going to do it, just do it. People will soon change their shopping habits - it's already been proven in other countries.

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

Corn starch bags are FULLY biodegradable products, and would be an ideal mandatory alternative for fast food/takeaway outlets.

Clause

5. Should smaller retailers be exempted from a mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags? Why / why not?

Position

No

Notes

Why should they? A bag is a bag. If we want shoppers to change their habits, it needs to be a blanket ban, or it gets confusing. I imagine more of these bags end up in landfill/watercourses, because they're generally smaller than supermarket bags, so can't be re-used for much.

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

What does the number of employees have to do with how many bags they get through? Most migrant businesses run on just the family or one person working many hours, but they still get through loads of bags. If smaller retailers are to be exempt, they must stock fully biodegradable corn starch bags or paper bags. No debate, sorry.

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

Give people an inch and they'll take a mile... i.e. they won't do anything about preparing for the change until the first time they go shopping and there are no bags for sale. Phase them out straight away, and they have no alternative, but to react to that change..., in exactly the same way as they would if it were a phased phase out - i.e. on the day there's no plastic bags available!

Clause

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

Position

Other (please specify)

Notes

Within one to two months.

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

You cannot put a price on the un-polluted future of our oceans and environment. We have to start looking long term, not just tomorrow.

Clause

9. Do you think that reasonably practicable alternatives to single-use plastic shopping bags exist in New Zealand? Why / why not?

Notes

As i say, corn starch alternatives are available, but they are currently quite expensive. As a nation, we need to get back to basics. How did we shop fifty years ago? We bought loose fruit & veg, used paper bags for smaller food items, including bread. Newspaper for wet fish and meat, glass bottles for liquids...etc etc... It worked extremely well. We didn't starve and there would have been far less waste generated by stores and households because we weren't forced into buying more than we needed with pre-packaged products. Stores also wasted less, because they ordered less. Retailers also have a huge part to play in the reduction of plastic and waste. If they didn't demand such a high percentage of pre-packaged plastic goods, our waste would reduce dramatically. Why do we need to adopt change, if this change is detrimentally damaging?

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)

Notes

Make them of a quality that lasts. I purchased mine in Italy three years ago, and have used them every day since. They're still as good as new, and will last for at least another five or six years yet. The re-usable ones available in this country are poor quality and don't last long enough. Retailers who offer to replace worn out re-usable bags are not doing the environment any favours at all, as their bags just end up in landfill because they're no good.

Clause

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

Notes

Nothing. I have no need for them now, and haven't used them for years. It's really not that difficult!

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

Manufacturers and Retailers are the source for monitoring. The majority of our single use plastic comes from here. Consumers have little choice in how our goods are sold to us. To eliminate this cancer on society, we have to go to source to control it - the suppliers and retailers. A mandatory Environmental Legislation for manufacturers and retailers is the only way forward for controlling the use of single use plastics. Manufacturers/retailers must by law, conform to maximum percentages of plastic packaging for all goods. Plastic is just a cheap and easy option for them and they'll continue to just keep churning it out without a conscience, until Governments take charge and start imposing sanctions on them to change their packaging.

Clause

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

Notes

It cannot come soon enough in my opinion.... hopefully followed swiftly by plastic bottle bank recycling in stores, or better still.... switching back to glass bottles.