

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

Ecometrics

Reference no: 5605

Submitter Type: Business / Industry

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

We are well overdue at taking this step. We should already be looking to phase out all single use packaging.

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

All single use plastic bags should be phased out. There is no reason for single use products in this climate and time.

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

By phasing them out across NZ consumers will become used to needing to bring bags with them. Plastic bags provided by smaller retailers are just as harmful as those provided by larger retailers. There should not be any single use plastic bags in NZ whatsoever. We have several global biodiversity spots including important marine life that is very heavily affected by plastics. NZ should be setting the example in this area not lagging behind.

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

NA

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

I have not studied the feasibility of quicker phase outs but I think the shortest phase-out period possible should be used. There may

be justification for an intermediary step such as an immediate tax on plastic bags followed by a total phase out however the goal should be to phase out all plastic bags as quickly as possible.

Clause

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

Position

two months

Notes

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 cost of losing marine species, of polluting our water ways, of humans consuming microplastics that are now in most waterways all far outweigh any costs of implementation. Moreover, it is obvious that global phase out of single-use plastic will be necessary in the very near future - any delays in implementing the mandatory phase out are simply that - delays. NZ cannot continue to boast a clean green image if we do not move back to the front of the pack in taking steps towards pro-environmental legislation.

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 many different reusable bag/box options. I personally haven't used plastic bags for years. Other countries have showed that a national shift is straight forward.

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

Multiple-use shopping bags are typically priced at a point where people would prefer to reuse rather than buy new. Infrastructure such as "take one - leave one" points at malls/supermarkets do not currently have very good uptake because plastic single-use bags are still prevalent. However, without an alternative, shoppers would very quickly learn to bring their bags. Shoppers manage to remember their shopping discount vouchers when they go shopping. It is just that there is not currently much disincentive.

Clause

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

Notes

This is not relevant to me or my family. However, I think for low impact families it may be useful to be given several to start with. I have noticed that some supermarkets also offer the "forever" bag - buy one and if it wears out bring it back to swap at no cost. Government could incentivise this sort of scheme for smaller retailers.

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

I am not sure how much data exists currently. However, I would suggest that companies manufacturing or importing single use plastics (as a product or packaging for their product) should be required to disclose this data.

Clause

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

Notes

This is a good first step but most of the plastic waste that is making it's way into our environment is not shopping bags, straws, and coffee cups which seem to have the major focus. Alternatives to single use plastic packaging need to urgently be explored and brought in.