

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

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Reference no: 5691

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

When I immigrated to NZ in 1981 plastic bags were not a 'thing'. It was so refreshing to be given a paper bag or a purchase wrapped in a small bit of paper and secured with a single piece of sticky tape. Rubbish bags were multi-layered 'clean sacks' available at supermarkets. Supermarket bags were brown paper. Milk bottles were glass. We have lived free of this dependence on plastic before. For the sake of the environment we have no choice. We must abandon our dependence on plastic bags.

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

The less plastic the better.

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

We need to eliminate as much plastic as possible. I would boycott any retailer that continued to supply plastic bags.

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

All plastic from all sources is bad for the environment. The transition away from plastic bags should be equitable.

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

There should be no exemption for retail of any size.

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. Communities have been transitioning already with cloth bags available and in use.

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

The environment is the most important thing in this discussion. Plastic bags are harmful to the environment therefore they must go. The cost in terms of lost ecosystem, species, human and animal health, NZ image is far greater than cuts to some businesses profits. There are alternatives and bag manufacturers can transition to paper or cloth or disappear. This is their choice. A clean and healthy environment is the foundation for all life and livelihood on the planet. There is no justification for maintaining a plastic bag culture.

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

Of course! If you can carry a purchase in your hands that is practicable. Paper bags are available and can be manufactured here in NZ from forestry by products. Cloth bags are the best alternative and are now widely used and produced. It is important to ensure that alternatives, especially clothlike alternatives, are not in fact made from plastic.

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

Sell cloth bags as fund raisers. Teach Environmental Studies in all schools including Sustainability. Upper Hutt has had two years of give away promotional cloth shopping bags printed with local artwork. These are great gifts, tourist items and essential for shopping. Education programmes that graphically show the results of the plastic bag culture should provide incentive for children to pressure their parents to abandon plastic.

Clause

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

Notes

We abandoned plastic bags many years ago. We transitioned first to brown paper bags and now cloth bags. We still line the bin with a brown paper bag. They are sold at Moore Wilsons and could be easily sold at super markets. It's a no brainer.

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

Ask retailers to stock take their supplies and report quantities remaining every month. Contact environmental groups that do beach clean ups and see if they are seeing a decrease in the number of single use plastics in their actions.

Clause

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

Notes

Plastic beverage containers, especially milk bottles also need attention asap.