

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

**Reference no:** 5749

**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**

Single use plastic bags are causing significant environmental impacts as noted by the Ministry, while their use is entirely down to habit and convenience rather than necessity. With practical alternatives available and low recycling rates in New Zealand, the environmental impact significantly outweighs any benefits provided by single use 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**

Bags less than 70 microns in thickness are likely to be treated as a single use bag by customers, and so will limit the change in consumer behaviour and increase the number of thicker bags going to landfill.

**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**

There should be no exemptions to types of single use plastic bags. Any exemption reduces the likelihood of consumers quickly developing the required habits to successfully move to reusable bags. Programmes to encourage quick and cost effective uptake of reusable bags should be supported.

**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**

With alternatives readily available and affordable there is no need for smaller retailers to be exempt. Again, providing any exemption will risk consumers taking longer to accept the change and develop a habit of using reusable bags, undermining the change required.

**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 smaller retailers.

**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**

Six months is an appropriate timeframe to enable retailers to adapt their business and public awareness campaigns to be run. Any longer is inappropriate as it diminishes the urgency of the problem and is not required to effectively implement the 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**

**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**

My household has easily avoided using single use plastic shopping bags for two years, since making a conscious decision to do so. Reusable shopping bags and produce bags, paper and washing bins etc have proven fully adequate as alternatives to single use plastic bags. This has also been demonstrated in other parts of the world where supermarkets have long phased out single use plastic bags

**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**

Placing the cost of a reusable bag onto consumers should encourage them to continue using it until it is no longer fit for purpose - currently the cost is borne by retailers and ultimately the environment and many consumers have no awareness of the cost. Public awareness campaigns and voluntary incentive schemes will also aid.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

High level and continuing public awareness campaigns to help people build the habit of carrying reusable bags with them and alternatives to typical uses - particularly the often argued uses of bin liners and dog poo bags. Targeted and continued campaigns to also educate people on the environmental impact of single use plastic to help embed the 'why'.

**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**

Retailers should be required to provide collated data on single use plastics as part of a mandatory product stewardship scheme for single use plastics and packaging. Targets for reductions over time should be set and tracked.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

Education of why single use plastic bags are no longer acceptable and alternatives to common uses of them will be critical. Taking the awareness campaigns wider than simply single use plastic shopping bags will also be important to get people on board and carry momentum to reducing other types of waste e.g. home composting, choosing to purchase products with minimal/recyclable packaging, improved recycling rates and effectiveness.

**You have elected to withhold your personal details from publication.**