

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

Scott Henderson, **Scott Henderson**

Reference no: 576

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

This is an outstanding and bold initiative that the Government can be truly proud of. Hopefully it doesn't cost you 'NIMBY' support...

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

Ban should apply to all non-resuable, non-permanent bags - regardless of thickness - so this doesn't become a plastic industry loophole.

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

Reason is, that there is no difference in impact to their business, than there is to larger retailers - in fact larger retailers have a bigger adjustment to make. Perhaps small businesses could get more assistance with transitioning / access to replacement products.

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

3

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

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

Not sure

Notes

In the long term, (and the broader view in terms of international precedent etc) the benefits certainly seem to outweigh the transition costs. Not sure how this would be calculated in the short term - as NZ's plastic output is only a small percentage of the global issue, which is unlikely to change at the same speed as here.

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

Permanent / reusable bags of the type available in most supermarkets seem the most practical alternative. This would be preferable to 'non-plastic' but still disposable technologies. It's the waste of single-use, and the discarding into trash / environment that causes the greatest issues, not the plastic itself.

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

Not having a disposable alternative will be the best incentive! But given that visible support (for users to transition) is needed to avoid backlash... perhaps a national (standard, industry-wide) incentive that retailers could buy into. Such as an across-the-board discount for bringing own bags (which retailers could top up on if they wished to attract customers).

Clause

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

Notes

A lack of alternatives - and cheap re-usable bags being available at retailer point of sale. Making re-usable bags available (and tax deductible!!)

Clause

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

Notes

The biggest concern (and narrative from National / plastic industry etc) will be that NZ is going it alone, and ultimately 'penalising' consumers while making little overall difference (due to other countries, etc). Key points I suppose is that the effects (of minimising) will naturally be seen locally. In addition, from a PR sense, tying this to other NZ 'firsts' such as nuclear ship ban, universal suffrage etc... could remind the public that many changes that we ultimately look back on as the right thing, and are proud of as a nation, were controversial & difficult at the outset. But ultimately, investing in removing 'check-out pain' and supporting users to transition will be the biggest driver of public response.

You have elected to withhold your personal details from publication.