

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

Ahika Consulting

**Reference no:** 5772

**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**

Fantastic. Well done. Great start - we have so much more to do still on reducing the flow of other plastics into this great, small country.

**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**

We need to send a strong and clear message. Don't let retailers swap out thin bags for slightly thicker ones. That is ridiculous and misses the point. As Professor Michael Braungart says, "don't waste your time rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic."

**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**

No, I think every business, large and small, needs to take responsibility for the waste they create through their business.

**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**

n/a. We think everyone needs to stand up and be counted.

**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**

Yes, you have done the research. We believe you know what is best.

**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. It is about time our NZ government took the lead on phasing out single-use plastic bags, we also thank you for understanding and starting to implement a circular economy approach. Plastic bags are just one of many issues. We need to turn off the tap to the huge amounts of terrible materials coming into this country that we cannot deal with at the end of life. Thank you for bringing it to the public's attention.

**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**

Yes, there are fabric bags made from old textile material available around the country from many great community initiatives (Boomerang bags, Bags for Good in Dunedin, etc). There are tiny, fold-up fabric bags that pop into your computer bag, handbag or man-bag for when you forget to take your re-usable bags to the supermarket. Supermarkets have been selling fabric bags for years. There are cardboard boxes in almost every supermarket available to pack goods into. There are solid plastic containers you can buy and put into the boot of your car so when you drive to the supermarket you can fill those instead of plastic bags. We all just have to think and plan more than we currently do, yes it is hard to re-adjust, but we are clever human beings, we can do it.

**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**

People are lazy and want convenience (sorry to generalise and be negative) but in our opinion, we find this a lot. However, on saying that look at what can be achieved. NZ has done an incredible job of moving people away from smoking cigarettes. I think this is what we have to do with plastic bags... information in your face, social media, mobile apps, get it out there about the damage our plastic bags do to our beautiful environment.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

We already live without plastic shopping bags (not gloating, just saying). For my family, the harder items to get rid of are bread bags, muesli bars wrappers, dog food bags, excessive plastic packaging around other food items, polystyrene packaging that turns up when you don't want it to. I know I could make my own bread, muesli bars and dog food - to save on buying it, but to be honest I don't have time. I am just like everyone else, I want convenience! I need the producers of those items to come up with clever solutions (e.g., sealed paper bags for bread, natural material bag for bulk dog biscuits, cardboard boxes for snack bars), or the manufacturers can just take their plastic packaging. I don't want it.

**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**

You need access to all private landfills and their data. We have worked with city councils, they only operate a very small percentage of landfills, so they only know a small percentage of data. It MUST be mandatory for ALL landfills to provide data to Central Government. In an ideal world that would be available to City Councils too.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

We congratulate you for getting this to the public for consultation. The only way for positive change to happen is for our government and our communities to work together. So, we believe compliance and enforcement will be governed by the activist members of our communities, they will ensure small and large businesses are working together to make our planet cleaner. We want to help make this change happen. See our website: [www.ahika.co.nz](http://www.ahika.co.nz) to see what we do. This is important and if we can help, we will.