

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

Reference no: 5807

Submitter Type: Other

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

Friends of the Farm does agree with the phase out of single-use plastic bags, including degradable bags for the following reasons; environmental- plastic bags are known to cause major harm to our natural environment. Progress- we see this as a starting point towards a country less dependent on single use plastics, this will encourage behaviour change. Circular economy- as well as encouraging individuals to change this will influence the economy to move towards a circular model. Friends of the farm also supports the phase out of degradable bags as there is currently no system to process them effectively. We would also like to highlight a ban on oxo-degradable bags as these are potentially as bad or worse for the environment as plastic bags. This is due to the way they break down into fragments and continue polluting waterways and the environment.

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 minimum should be 70 microns as less than this would be seen to be single use. Providing thicker bags will mean the product can be reused and will decrease the amount of plastic bags going to landfill. This will also provide opportunity for moving towards a circular economy. The Government and MFE can facilitate this move where plastic bags of 70 microns and more can be recycled into other useful products.

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

Friends of the farm supports there being no single use plastic bags of any material available for free in New Zealand. Our group provides bags for our community, further removing cost barriers for low income families. MFE can further support this by providing other options to single use plastic bags and providing support to groups making an effort to make alternatives.

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 retailers should be exempt from the ban of single use plastic bags. There are alternatives available for retailers of any size. There are many small retailers near the ocean and other waterways and not including these retailers will impact the natural environment they are in. Exempt retailers near water ways would keep a more direct path of pollution to the sea.

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

Maximum of 5 full time employees.

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

This phase out should be completed as soon as possible. This time allows for public and retailer education and adjustment.

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

Friends of the farm is building a sense of community in our area as people become more aware of the impact of plastic bags and want to find alternatives. We have fostered this by providing sewing bees which benefit community and individual well being thanks to a sense of inclusion, pride and knowledge of the positive impact of the project. Locally this has not had any major monetary impacts and local businesses are getting on board with the project, if anything, growing their business by showing their support. The move away from single use plastic bags will provide more employment opportunities in the move towards a circular economy. Those people depending on single use plastic bags for income will be provided for in growing industries such as recycling.

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 practical alternatives to single-use plastic shopping bags in New Zealand. Community groups are making their own for locals to use. Large retailers are making their own alternative reusable bags. These alternatives are growing and the phase out of the single-use bags will foster this growth.

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

The national campaign can include supporting retailers to educate their customers on the phase out of plastic bags. The campaign can also include supporting community groups to educate the public.

Clause

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

Notes

We recommend the government develop and implement an educational campaign to support behavioural change. The campaign should involve simple positive messages to deal with the major sticking points such as bin liners and dog poo bags, including support for home composting education and composting collections. Removing food waste from kitchen bins enables householders to stop lining their bin with plastic bags as it removes most of the smell from their household waste.

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

Retailers should be provided information on: • The most environmentally friendly alternatives to single use plastic bags. • The need

to avoid bags made from composite materials e.g. jute bags lined with plastic; paper bags with rope handles. • The need to have certification for any reusable compostable bags • The importance of providing disposal information (eg recycling, composting, landfill) on the bag for end-of-use. We urge to government to help retailers to breakdown the regulatory barriers around food supply without reliance on single use plastics and without the burden of risk being all on the retailer.

You have elected to withhold your personal details from publication.

Supporting documents from your Submission

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