

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

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Reference no: 5858

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 ban is very important, and should not be watered down in any way, including the types of bags that are banned.

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

Plastic is plastic. There are plenty of alternatives which can, and should, be encouraged and possibly subsidised. PLEASE do not water down this ban.

Clause

3. Are you aware of types of single-use plastic shopping bags that should be exempt from a mandatory phase out?

Position

Not sure

Notes

I don't think ANY kind of single-use plastic bags should be exempt. There are plenty of alternatives, and companies will just do lip service and "greenwashing" if you let them get away with it.

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

Smaller retailers can offer alternatives just like anyone else. What's wrong with a sturdy paper bag? Why should they be exempt - it's not like their plastic bags are less polluting, and they are often the worst offenders, especially the takeaway shops, grocers and \$2 shops etc.

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

1, but actually zero is better. I don't think they should be exempt at all.

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

It gives time for everyone to get used to the idea, and for alternatives to be put in place.

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 ban on plastic bags may help revitalise more environmentally friendly NZ-based packaging industries, e.g. flax weaving, sturdy brown paper bags, cardboard boxes, glass recyclers, cornstarch, rice starch, hemp, etc. These industries should be given startup grants and support alongside the ban - in fact if done right, NZ based industries could benefit from the ban overall. Also, this ban should only be the first step in reducing the terrible amount of excess packaging of EVERYTHING we buy, especially plastics. The NZ Packaging Council and supermarkets have been extremely irresponsible so far and must be brought to account.

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

Flax kite, organic cotton, denim, recycled textiles, hemp, recycled glass jars, cornstarch, rice starch, cardboard boxes, and sturdy paper bags. These industries should be given startup grants and support alongside the ban.

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

There should also be awareness of the many different alternatives for carrying your shopping. See above.

Clause

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

Notes

Force the supermarkets to provide alternative packaging in the produce section, bakery, butchery, deli, fishmonger and bulk bins. They are some of the worst culprits for plastic packaging.

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

Rubbish surveys at landfills, post-mortem surveys of marine life, beach cleanup tonnage surveys, compulsory reporting of imports.

Clause

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

Notes

I work at Auckland Zoo and we frequently see dying sea turtles who have ingested plastic waste floating in the oceans, thinking it's food. This has got to stop. See <https://www.aucklandzoo.co.nz/news/plastic-plea-save-sea-turtles>. Please do NOT water down this ban, or give in to pressure from small retailers, supermarkets or the Packaging Council. Make it as stringent as it needs to be, and use it as an opportunity to promote and support alternative packaging industries. Remember this should only be the first step in getting thin plastics out of our waste stream altogether. After this you should force manufacturers and producers to reduce excess packaging too.