

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

Olga Speranskaya

**Reference no:** 5945

**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 a logical first step to a broader approach to minimising plastic waste in New Zealand. While there are more significant contributors to our mounting waste problem (e.g. fishing nets), plastic bags are a highly recognizable and publicly visible item, are used by the widest possible citizen constituency and have a wide range of readily available alternatives.

**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**

With our current recycling statistics, I feel that any and all plastic bags should be phased out. Plastic stays in the environment forever, and I am concerned that the continued use of plastic packaging of whatever thickness will impact our seas, our drinking water supply, and our soils. There seems to be emerging evidence that even air quality may be affected by plastic leaching, so the sooner and the wider the ban the better.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

We should be going for the widest possible ban on plastic shopping bags. There are plenty of viable and more environmentally sustainable alternatives readily available - we can just shake up any house and dozens of bags will no doubt appear! I do not feel that there are valid reasons for excluding any categories of plastic shopping bags from the mandatory phase out.

**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**

My experience is that smaller retailers are more keen to drop plastic shopping bags. Their decision making is faster and more customer conscious, and the small retailers' involvement in their communities is high - so they see and feel the impacts of single-use plastic bags on their most immediate environments. I would run a comprehensive consultation with small businesses to seek their feedback, I am sure you'll find they are ready to change...

**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).

**Notes**

I am an economist so could talk about the monetary equation here - however I think the question is really about the health of the environment, so the equation is not that simple. To me, moving as much plastic as possible out of our environment should be an absolute priority now and for years to come, until plastic use is reduced to a realistic recyclable volume. We can't put a price tag on the health of ourselves, our soils, our water and marine life. We should not be getting into value-for-money discussions about this topic.

**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**

Absolutely. Our family went plastic bag free earlier this year, and we've had no difficulty finding boxes, canvas bags, Boomerang Bags, produce bags and containers to put our purchases in. Our regular shops have been fantastic, understanding and receptive to change. Even the supermarkets. Although I have to say our buying patterns have shifted away from larger, full of plastic supermarkets to Bin Inn, local bakeries and butchers, organic shops and markets. In my view, the change is definitely feasible for Kiwi families.

**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)

**Notes**

The ban will do this work for you. Shoppers will be forced to use alternative bags, and ultimately any non-plastic bags are better for the environment. If you wanted to maximise the potential impact from this change, in terms of the types of packaging options people use, an information campaign may be an option.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

Don't need help. All our family needed to see was a few news articles about marine wildlife suffering from our reckless use of plastic packaging, and photos of our landfills not coping with plastic 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**

Run a public survey now and then repeat six-monthly for the next few years, using a reputable market research company and representative samples of the population.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

Can't thank you enough for this initiative. If you would like support with for example information campaigns in relation to this change, I would be happy to promote content through our local Facebook group, Waste Free Kapiti. We are about 80 members. There are other similarly focussed Facebook groups around NZ, the main one being Zero Waste in NZ (20,000 members). On a separate note, the quality of the consultation document has been impressive, the information was clearly laid out, articulate, well thought through. Hopefully my contribution has been helpful.