

Subject: Plastic shopping bags submission

Recipient: proposed-mandatory-phase-out-of-single-use-plastic-shopping-bags@submissions.mfe.govt.nz

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Kia ora Eugenic and the waste committee,

Thanks to the rubbish trip and waste busters who are leading great work on this area. Theor points that I agree with are:

- 100% support a mandatory phase-out of single-use plastic shopping bags
- the ban should apply to bags 70 microns and under
- all degradable plastic bags should be included in the ban (there is currently no system in place to collect these facilities and not enough facilities to process them effectively. (A recent WasteMinz survey found that only two composting facilities in New Zealand are willing to take these bags in their facilities.)

Complete ban on all oxo-degradable bags. We call on the government to implement a total ban on oxo-degradable bags as they are a contaminant to recycling and are potentially worse for the environment than non-degradable plastic bags. They cannot be recycled or composted and evidence indicates that oxo-degradable plastics do not degrade into harmless residues in the marine environment, but instead fragment into 'tiny pieces' of plastic and contribute to microplastic pollution).

- the ban should apply to all retailers (i.e. there should be no exemption for small retailers)
- the government should run an information campaign to inform the public about the environmental impacts of different reusable bags, as well as education campaigns about alternative ways of lining bins and picking up dog poo (other than having to buy brand new bags for these purposes, which to be clear, are not included in the mandatory phase-out)
- this consultation is a great start, but we hope it represents the beginning of central government's willingness to use the Waste Minimisation Act to help NZ reduce its waste, and not the end. Section 23 could also be used to ban/regulate other single-use plastics, we could also use part 2 of the Act to set up mandatory product stewardship for packaging, and we could use s 23 or mandatory product stewardship to institute a nationwide bottle deposit scheme.

Circular economy transition: the phase out presents an opportunity to provide a working model of the circular model. We ask that MFE take the lead by advising on best practice around material choices for reusable bags, and by investigating and coordinating a closed loop, onshore recycling system for plastic reusable bags.

This is a massive opportunity to create a new Zealand without waste. Every step counts.

Cheers,
Pauline