



Proposed mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags

SUBMISSION FORM

The Government is seeking feedback on a proposed mandatory phase out of the sale or distribution of single-use plastic shopping bags.

For more information about the Government's proposals read our [Proposed mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags consultation document](#).

Submissions close at 5.00 pm on Friday 14 September 2018.

Making a submission

You can make a submission in three ways:

1. Use our online submission form available at www.mfe.govt.nz/consultation/plasticshoppingbags. This is our preferred way to receive submissions.
2. Complete this submission form and send to us by email or post.
3. Write your own submission and send to us by email or post.

Publishing and releasing submissions

All or part of any written submission (including names of submitters) may be published on the Ministry for the Environment's website www.mfe.govt.nz. Unless you clearly specify otherwise in your submission, we will consider that you have consented to website posting of both your submission and your name.

Contents of submissions may be released to the public under the Official Information Act 1982 following requests to the Ministry for the Environment (including via email). Please advise if you have any objection to the release of any information contained in a submission and, in particular, which part(s) you consider should be withheld, together with the reason(s) for withholding the information. We will take into account all such objections when responding to requests for copies of, and information on, submissions to this consultation under the Official Information Act.

The Privacy Act 1993 applies certain principles about the collection, use and disclosure of information about individuals by various agencies, including the Ministry for the Environment. It governs access by individuals to information about themselves held by agencies. Any personal information you supply to the Ministry in the course of making a submission will be used by the Ministry only in relation to the matters covered by this consultation. Please clearly indicate in your submission if you do not wish your name to be included in any summary of submissions that the Ministry may publish.

Submission form

The questions below are a guide only and all comments are welcome. You do not have to answer all the questions. To ensure others clearly understand your point of view, you should explain the reasons for your views and provide supporting evidence where appropriate.

Contact information

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Name* | Alice Holmes |
| Organisation (if applicable) | Click here to enter text. |
| Address | |
| Phone | |
| Email* | |

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Submitter type* | Individual | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| | NGO | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Business / Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Local government | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Central government | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Iwi | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Other (please specify) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Plastic free promoter/ volunteer/ activistr |

* Questions marked with an asterisk are mandatory.

Questions

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?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Why / Why not?

Am so proud of New Zealand leading the way to a sustainable future. We need to set our own path and not follow the destructive models of other nations. We are a small country with big-thinkers and have the potential to set an example in the developed world of what a circular and

environmentally sustainable economy looks like. We must protect the beautiful country we have now.

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?

- less than 50 microns in thickness
- less than 70 microns in thickness
- Other (please specify)

All disposable plastic bags. Often people just focus on the flimsier supermarket bags as being a problem, but thicker retail shopping bags are just as much of a problem. They have the same potential of escaping into the environment and causing harm to the ecosystem and wildlife.

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

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If yes, what are they and why should they be exempt?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

4. Do you currently manufacture, sell, provide or import for sale or personal use these types of single-use plastic shopping bags:

- a. 50 microns or less in thickness
- b. more than 50 microns and less than 70 microns in thickness?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If yes, please specify which bags and explain how a phase out would be likely to impact on you.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

5. Should smaller retailers be exempted from a mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags?

- Yes
- No

Not sure

Why / Why not?

No BUT I do think that smaller retailers should receive some kind of subsidy to ease into the transition as often paper bags are more expensive and this could hurt them more financially than bigger retailers.

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?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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?

Yes

No

Not sure

Why / Why not?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

If no, what do you think would be a more appropriate phase-out period?

two months

nine months

one year

other (please specify)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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?

Yes

No

Not sure

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).

With a suitable phase-out period retailers and consumers alike should have the time necessary to seek out appropriate alternatives to single use plastic bags. The monetary savings to the

taxpayer for disposing of the millions of plastic bags consumed each year is likely to be significant, particularly when you consider, generally speaking, that recycling of plastics is a complex and inefficient process.

With a little forethought and small initial outlay consumers can use reusable bags many times over and bags made of natural fibres will pose no significant environmental threat at the end of their life. Compare this with single use plastic bags which are difficult to collect, process, and stop from entering the natural environment. Used on average for a matter of minutes they persist in the environment potentially forever! It's absurd.

I look forward to the demise of the single use plastic bag heralding a new era of innovation and forward thinking. A move away from a linear economy to a circular one where precious resources are truly valued and the impact of our daily consumption is considered at every level.

9. Do you think that reasonably practicable alternatives to single-use plastic shopping bags exist in New Zealand?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If no, what do you think is missing currently that would need to be available?

Immediately I want to say yes, because of course there are many suitable alternatives such as, paper, cotton, canvas, harakeke. But the crux is the shift in thinking and culture for Kiwis to adopt these alternatives. People will need time to adjust and there will be people who struggle. For those people an environmentally benign and affordable option should be available. Currently I do not believe there are enough truly biodegradable/ compostable bags available for that transition to happen smoothly and that will need to be looked at.

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)

- voluntary incentive schemes by individual retailers
- national information campaign and mobile phone app for shoppers
- other (please specify)

There really needs to be no 'cop out' by allowing retailers to supply thicker multi use plastic bags. If there's none available or the cost to buy an emergency bag is significant people WILL remember.

Boomerang Bag type set ups will start to appear more in communities for the forgetful types. Incentivising good behaviour is a must, if people are rewarded properly for their efforts it will also make the habit stick. I currently live in Japan where most retailers don't charge for bags and the rewards for bringing your own bags are so meagre that it's no wonder most people don't take their own bags.

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

We've already adjusted to a plastic-free life, but more effort from retailers to stop giving out bags before the phase out would go a long way to helping others.

Also running a campaign with suggestions for alternatives to rubbish bin liners and doggy doo

bags, these seem to be the two big things people can't get their head around. Encouraging the correct separation of green waste and composting would also eliminate much of the perceived need to contain rubbish in an airtight plastic bag.

12. How can data on single-use plastic shopping bags and other single-use plastics entering the market and monitoring of reductions be improved?

I often wonder if the bags referred to are just the type of single use bags given out at supermarkets or all retailers? It's unclear. The average usage numbers always seem low. Most people seem to focus on supermarket bag but how are other retailers being held to account? Have also recently heard there's been an increase in people buying plastic rubbish bin liners, will these be counted in single-use statistics? How about all the flimsy plastic produce bags, are they being included in data?

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

There really is not time to waste.

We have the opportunity now to get ahead and lead with innovative new ways of doing things. If we make exceptions for plastic bag usage it will just slow down the entire process of ending wasteful single use plastics.

I just read that soft plastics are no longer being bought by the Australian buyer/processor and they are now being stockpiled. It seems like absolute lunacy to me to allow the continued and increasing use of disposable plastics when we just don't have the facilities in place in New Zealand to deal with them responsibly and in a way that will not harm the environment.

Now is the time to decided which way we want to go, full blast ahead with no thought for the consequences to our environment or, take a step back, assess, and redesign a more sustainable and harmonious future.

Releasing submissions

Your submission may be released under the Official Information Act 1982 and may be published on the Ministry's website. Unless you clearly specify otherwise in your submission, we will consider that you have consented to website posting of both your submission and your name.

Please check this box if you would like your name, address, and any personal details withheld.

Note that the name, email, and submitter type fields are mandatory for you to make your submission.

When your submission is complete

If you are emailing your submission, send it to plasticshoppingbags.submissions@mfe.govt.nz as a:

- PDF
- Microsoft Word document.

If you are posting your submission, send it to Proposed Mandatory Phase Out of Single-use Plastic Shopping Bags, Ministry for the Environment, PO Box 10362, Wellington 6143.

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