

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

**Reference no:** 5991

**Submitter Type:** Local Government

**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**

WDC fully supports the mandatory phase out of the sale or distribution of single-use plastic shopping bags in New Zealand, including those made of degradable plastic, compostable bags and oxo-degradable bags. For the following reasons: 1. harmful effects associated with plastics in general on the environment; 2. the plastic 'elephant' has to be eaten in stages - removal of single-use plastic bags is a critical first step

**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 smaller the micron size, the more likely that customers will treat (< 50 microns) plastic bags as 'single use' and dispose of them. At the 70 Micron level, retailers are more likely to choose and supply bags which are genuinely reusable. This also supports the government and Ministry position on keeping products and materials in use - the circular economy.

**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**

This Council considers that no single use bags (of any material) should be available for free; however, we support mechanisms (e.g. a one-time provision of a small number of reusable bags free) which make it easier for low income earners to adopt the habit of taking their own bags when doing their shopping.

**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**

Some of the more visible littering problems occur with small dairy and takeaway shops, especially those in beachside locations. This is a problem 'gateway' for single use bags ending up in the environment and should be a target area for an education campaign by the Ministry working with the local council.

**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**

The Council would like to see single use bags phased out as quickly as practicable but considers the six month phase out to be

sufficient notice. It should also be advertised or promoted in a way that does not encourage hoarding of bags in advance of the ban date..

**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**

The Council supports the position of WasteMINZ on practicable alternatives, that is, provide information to retailers at least four months before the regulations come into force as this will allow retailers 10 months to source appropriate alternatives. In particular retailers should be provided information on: 1. the most environmentally friendly alternatives; 2. the need to avoid bags made from compound materials e.g. jute bags lined with plastic and paper bags with rope handles; 3. what standard reusable compostable bags need to be certified to be accepted by commercial composting facilities; and 4. the importance of providing disposal information on the bag for end of life.

**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**

voluntary incentive schemes by individual retailers

**Notes**

In supporting the WasteMINZ position, this Council believes retailers should be encouraged to consider providing a bag-for-life option if this appropriate for their business (as Countdown has done). Retailers should also be encouraged to charge for any bags handed out to reduce consumption.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

The Council supports the position of Wastebusters Wanaka in recommending 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 household bin liners, including support for home composting education and composting collections.

**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**

The Council supports the position of WasteMINZ, agreeing that retailers (or an agent acting for multiple retailers) should provide collated data on single use plastic bags. Given the current uncertainty of the total number of single use plastic bags imported into NZ, any packaging material that is produced or imported into NZ (above an undetermined volume/\$ value threshold), should be quantified and reported on via weight and unit count measures as well as dollar value. Targets for reductions over time should then 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**

To assist this transition, the Council believes retailers should be provided information on: 1. environmentally friendly alternatives to single use plastic bags; 2. avoiding bags made from composite materials; 3. the need to have certification for any reusable compostable bags; and 4. the importance of providing end-of-life disposal information on the bag.

**You have elected to withhold your personal details from publication.**