

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

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## Reference no: 6036

**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

Plastic bags generally serve a minimal purpose in time and function, yet, they are produced from non-renewable sources. Both the production and post-use processing cause greenhouse gasses. After use, the majority of bags end up in landfills or the environment (both terrestrial and marine) where they cause detrimental effects to all flora and fauna and can harbour and spread disease vectors. Eventually, the plastic will break down in smaller pieces, and potentially enter the human food chain. The economic costs of collection, processing, recycling, litter clean-up fees, flooding events, loss of tourism income, loss to fisheries, agriculture and maritime industry are compounded by long term food-security risks. Furthermore, it is likely that a majority of the mismanaged plastic bags end up far from our shores, adding to social and environmental injustice by leaving the problem for other nations to deal with.

### 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

All the reasons stated under #1 apply to any plastic (bag), regardless of its thickness.

### 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

### 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

It would create an extra opportunity for any retailer to connect with their clients. Retailers can also offer reusable and sustainable options for sale, or offer their excess cardboard boxes for free. Furthermore, retailers could introduce a loyalty type of scheme where customers receive a free store branded bag after so many visits. These are actions that can all be taken NOW so that when the ban goes into effect, their customers are all set.

### 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

No

### Notes

There is no justifiable nor socially responsible reason to continue with our resource depleting and waste producing habits. Plastic bag bans and levies have been in place for decades in many parts of the world, including Kenya, Bangladesh and India. It can hardly come as a surprise that NZ is finally starting to take steps to fulfil their moral and ecological duty. Resistance to the adaption of new habits will not disappear in 2,6 or 9 months and might as well be dealt with instantly. According to the numbers stated in the accompanying discussion document, New Zealanders use 6,250,000 bags per month. If "only" 1% of these end up in the environment, it would mean 62,500 bags more in the environment for every month "to get used to it". As for the retailers supplies: all bags are being imported. All retailers should now be aware of the upcoming ban and it is their fiduciary duty to plan accordingly.

**Clause**

7a. If no, what do you think would be a more appropriate phase-out period?

**Position**

Other (please specify)

**Notes**

Immediately

**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**

It is unclear as to which costs this question is referring to. Retailers will benefit as they no longer need to purchase, stock nor provide "free" bags. Individuals usually already have bags or other carrying devices (such as chillie bins, crates or backpacks). If retailers would be obligated to discount everyone bringing in their bag, it would assist in offsetting potential costs for the consumers. Concerning the costs of the administration, it is unclear as to how much they are. However, it is known that the costs of inaction far outways those of prevention (see response to Question 1) in terms of preventable environmental pollution.

**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**

**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**

Retailers could have an "emergency" supply of reusable bags; which can be used when needed and returned on a next shopping trip. This supply could alternatively be provided by non-profits, volunteers, the retailer or even the municipality.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

We haven't used SUPS for years.

**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**

Since all bags are imported (according to the discussion document), a simple reporting requirement upon customs clearance could be introduced. However, eventually bags should be illegal to be imported (like in for example Kenya). As per January 1st (or as soon as possible), retailers will have to submit a count of bags in inventory, as well as amounts of bags acquired after that, and/or a monthly accounting of bags. When this mandatory reporting is tallied over the coming year and until (after) installment of the ban, a rather precise picture should follow.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

A mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags is a good, yet small, overdue and symbolic start. Shopping bags are a minor portion of the overall (plastic) waste problem in New Zealand. Hopefully, this is the start of an ambitious National Waste

Prevention Strategy that encompasses all aspects of our unsustainable ways of producing, consuming and landfilling. Now is the time for NZ to leap ahead in the war on waste and become world leaders again.

#### Supporting documents from your Submission

ChristchurchSpring2017.png

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SouthIslandSpring2017.jpg

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FromOneBeach2017.jpg

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