



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*	
Organisation (if applicable)	Tasman District Council.
Address	
Phone	
Email*	

Submitter type*	Individual	<input type="checkbox"/>
	NGO	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Business / Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Local government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Central government	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Iwi	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Click here to enter text.

* 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?

Single use, lightweight plastic bags cause significant litter issues with waste management facilities and services of Council and waste plastics cause significant harm in the marine environment. Council supports the elimination of single-use plastic materials where feasible

alternatives exist.

Council considers that implementing a phase out of single use shopping bags is a positive first step by central government to take a leadership role in waste minimisation.

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)

Including heavier weight bags in the phase out is likely to reduce the incidence of retailers offering heavier weight single use bags as a free of charge substitute for lightweight bags.

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?

Council is not aware of any situations where there is no alternative to a single use plastic bag.

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.

N/A

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

- Yes
 No
 Not sure

Why / Why not?

Exemptions for small retailers is likely to result in inconsistency and uncertainty for consumers. A universal phase out across all retailers is likely to be easier to implement and communicate will be more likely to lead to a successful change in consumer choices.

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?

N/A

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?

Council does not have a strong view on a workable phase-out period but the end of the phase out should be timed to avoid peak shopping or holiday periods. We note that the published programme of work indicates that the regulations will come into force in July 2019, which would result in the restrictions applying from January 2020, which is not ideal.

Council supports an earlier implementation of regulations, so that the phase out can be in place before December 2019.

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

- two months
 nine months
 one year
 other (please specify)

N/A

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).

The Council does not have access to estimates of the nationwide cost and benefits of implementation, but consider that the benefits are likely to outweigh the costs.

From information provided in the consultation document, it is clear that the proposed approach is the most efficient because it does not require a change in legislation and has been shown to be most effective overseas.

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?

The voluntary phase out of single use shopping bags by major retailers has confirmed that reusable bags and other practical alternatives (such as paper bags, boxes and crates).

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)

Tasman District Council recommends that central government develop a comprehensive communications programme to provide reliable information for consumers to make informed choices on reusable shopping bags.

Tasman District Council supports voluntary incentive schemes such as the "bags for good" initiative by Countdown supermarkets (which offers recycling and replacement of reusable bags at their end of life).

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

Communities in Tasman District Council will benefit from a nationally led communication campaign that provides information for households on the alternatives to single-use plastic. This campaign should ideally include researched, robust and reliable information for consumers on the impact of their purchasing choices (for example, life cycle analyses of the alternatives).

The Ministry for the Environment is best placed to provide this information.

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

There is currently a demonstrated lack of reliable information on the fate of plastics in New Zealand. Tasman District Council recommend that central government improve data collection on the import, production, distribution, use and disposal of plastics in New Zealand.

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

Tasman District Council recommend that government implement mandatory labelling of soft plastics and consider regulating the distribution of "oxo-degradable", "biodegradable" and "compostable" plastics.

As outlined in work published by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, the wide range of plastics available create confusion for consumers and difficulty for recycling or composting processors. We support his call for "sorting out terminology", exploring the merits of standards and labelling and reviewing the implications for end of life infrastructure for each type of plastic.

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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