

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

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Reference no: 6089

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

There is currently no system in place to collect compostable bags. Oxo-degradable bags 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.

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

Any bag less than 70 is likely to be treated as a single use bag by customers, and so will limit the change in consumer behaviour and increase the number of thicker bags going to landfill. Retailers will be more likely to choose bags which are genuinely reusable.

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

I believe it is the consumers responsibility to be prepared with a reusable bag option when shopping regardless of the retailer. Education around this will help to create change in people's mindsets and help to form new shopping habits. For those instances where retailers wish to provide a bag they can source an alternative option and if necessary choose to recoup any additional cost incurred from the customer.

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 sooner the better. 6 months should be sufficient time to educate the public and for retailers to source and implement an alternative.

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**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

national information campaign and mobile phone app for shoppers

Notes

and incentive schemes by retailers

Clause

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

Notes

I feel that families would benefit from education to deal with the major sticking points such as bin liners and dog poo bags, including composting education and ideas around reducing household waste. For example: Removing food waste from kitchen bins and disposing of it in alternative ways such as composting, worm farm or donating as pig food to local farm enables householders to stop lining their bin with plastic bags as it removes most of the smell from their household waste.