

Single-use Plastic Bag Question and Answer

- 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?**

I wholeheartedly agree with this scheme to phase out single-use plastic shopping bags. The evidence provided in this document convinces me that the amount of plastic waste in our marine environments is an issue of national importance and needs to be dealt with. Single-use plastic bags are a commonly used item that is unnecessary and alternative options to these are readily available. Although the proposed mandatory phase-out is one of many approaches to reducing the number of plastic bags used, I believe that this is the most logical approach of the options listed and some of the others are not practical for New Zealand's personality.

- 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?

- i. less than 50 microns in thickness**
- ii. less than 70 microns in thickness**
- iii. other (please specify)**

I agree with option 1; less than 50 microns in thickness. Although the bags that range between 50-70 microns are still a major contributor to the plastic waste that pollutes global marine environments, I feel as though phasing out the single-use bags under 50 microns will be effective enough to significantly reduce New Zealand's output levels. If used efficiently, the bags ranging between 50 microns and 70 microns can be used multiple times. I feel as though New Zealand still require this range of plastic bags to perform tasks such as carrying masses of goods over long distances.

- 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?

Not sure

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

- i. 50 microns or less in thickness**
- ii. more than 50 microns and less than 70 microns in thickness?**

Yes / No

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

No, I do not. However, I do work for part-time at a Fresh Choice Supermarket. Fresh Choice provides bags that are 50 microns or less and I believe that phasing out these single-use plastic bags will have small impacts on the company if it was universal across New Zealand. I have already seen an increase in the use of reusable bags that are over 50 microns thick and

consumers have no complaints in buying and using these bags. If this phasing out only applied to some retailers then consumers may favour the place that provides free bags, however, smaller retailers are often not able to compete with the range and prices that larger retailers offer.

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, I believe that all retailers should have to comply with the phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags. Small retailers still make up a large proportion of businesses around New Zealand and are still large contributors to the issue being presented. The smaller retailers that rely on single-use plastic bags may need to consider increasing the thickness of the bags that they use to 50 or more microns.

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?

England defined large retailers to be those who employed 250 or more full-time equivalent employees in a year for the whole company. England has over ten times the population of New Zealand. I believe that the number of full-time equivalent employees for New Zealand retailers should be no more 15 for each individual business for them to be exempt from the phasing out of single-use plastic bags

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?

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

- i. two months**
- ii. nine months**
- iii. one year**
- iv. other (please specify)**

No, I believe that the phase out period should be at least nine months so that retailers are able to use their existing stock as well as allowing the New Zealand population time to adapt to the changes. I also believe that it would be considerate to give plastic bag producers in exporting countries more time to adapt to the change.

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).

Yes, I agree. Although businesses may incur costs to upgrade their plastic bags or systems for how they retail their goods, these costs do not necessarily have to be inflicted on the retailer. Consumers may be happy to pay a small fee so that they can transport their goods. Although buying goods from a store that does not supply free single-use plastic bags may seem unfavorable to them, it is a factor that they would have to accept as the phase out would be implemented to most retailers. Overall I think the benefits provided for by this scheme are far superior to alternative methods for reducing plastic waste in marine environments.

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

Yes / No / Not sure Why / Why not?

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

Yes. From my experience, I have shopped at many supermarkets that offer their own range of reusable bags such as New World and Countdown. I have noticed however that these reusable bags are only popular in supermarkets, most likely due to the number of goods purchased by each person. Many other retailers use thicker plastic bags which is an improvement on single-use plastic bags. I believe that other major types of retail stores such as Rebel Sport and JB HiFi implement alternatives such as reusable nylon bags.

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)

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

I believe that a national information campaign and mobile app for shoppers would be effective. The advertising that would come from this option would be enough to help people remember to bring their multiple-use bags with them when they go out to purchase goods. From experience working in a supermarket, many of the reasons why customers use single-use bags was that they simply forgot their reusable bag at home.

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

Purchasing multiple-use bags and leaving them in the car would mean that wherever I drive to, I would have a multiple-use bag readily available. Also, not throwing away thicker plastic bags would mean I would have them available to use as an alternative to single-use plastic bags around the home.

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

Requiring retailers in New Zealand to keep a stock-take on all single-use plastic bags that they purchase for their business will help monitor how many each retailer goes through. If people were to also be further encouraged to bring their plastic bags to the soft plastics collection places, a monitor of the quantity collected over time could be a representation of the number of plastic bags that are circulating the country.

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

I believe that if this phase out scheme is to come into an application, then there is going to be an initial period of complaining from the New Zealand public. However, once people and businesses have fully adapted to the change then they are going to realise both how little of an inconvenience it is and how beneficial the scheme is. Phasing out single-use plastic bags I feel is the start of what is to come in the Nations approach to becoming a 'circular economy'. Once it has become apparent that society doesn't need single-use plastic bags to function, more significant changes may come such as phasing out plastic packaging and wrappers.

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