

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

-, - (Neil Peacock)

**Reference no:** 6186

**Submitter Type:**

**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 really no such thing as bio-degradable plastic. We need to eliminate ALL plastic bags as far as possible. Eliminate! is the most important. Reuse/recycle is not the answer. Plastic is plastic and eventually, even if controlled, ends up in the landfill - pollution and a problem for future generations and earth creatures.

**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**

Other (please specify)

**Notes**

ALL plastic bags need to go. Otherwise there is 'competition' and methods of getting around regulations for 'convenience and efficiency'. Retailers would only try to outdo each other and the public concern under-mined, and become complacent about the importance of caring for the environment. Plastic bags are in fact extremely useful, but if we want them for a specific purpose (storage etc), then we need to pay for them - the charge should include the environmental aspect.

**Clause**

3. Are you aware of types of single-use plastic shopping bags that should be exempt from a mandatory phase out?

**Position**

Yes

**Notes**

Only the absolutely necessary - eg for wrapping of meat or fish etc. Even then there are many everyday foods for which there is no need, like biscuits and muffins in plastic trays and wrapping. If these were available in bulk, the customer could buy any amount in a brown paper bag - as used years ago.

**Clause**

3a. If yes, what are they and why should they be exempt?

**Notes**

As above: Only the absolutely necessary - eg for wrapping of meat or fish etc. Even then there are many everyday foods for which there is no need, like biscuits and muffins in plastic trays and wrapping. If these were available in bulk, the customer could buy any amount in a brown paper bag - as used years ago.

**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**

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**Clause**

5. Should smaller retailers be exempted from a mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags? Why / why not?

**Position**

No

**Notes**

Definitely not. This only blurs regulations. Shoppers should bring their own bags and retailers have cloth bags available for purchase

should the shopper be caught short.

**Clause**

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?

**Notes**

NO - the number of employees has nothing to do with banning plastic bags.

**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**

The timing should be based on the current in-shop supply. When this runs out plastic bags end. Customers already are coping with this and retailers have had plenty of warning.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

As above, as soon as retailers in-shop supply runs out. Two months at most.

**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**

No

**Notes**

Costs are one off, and irrelevant. If the cost (both monetary and non-monetary) had been considered in the past, we would not be coping with landfills and seas full of plastic now. Depriving humanity and all creatures of their right to a healthy environment is the essential cost to be considered.

**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**

Yes, cloth bags, and the co-operation/collaboration of retailers with recycled containers; Return to lessons from the past - how was it managed years ago? Certainly, it could be a little less convenient and require more forethought, but necessary. Also, hemp 'plastic' which degrades more like paper could be used. A new industry, more employment. Greaseproof paper and paper bags were used a lot in the past - No excuses. The Level 'the playing field': if the true cost of plastic was on corporations balance sheets, would we find that it was equal to or less than paper bags.

**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**

Other (please specify)

**Notes**

Production of multi-use bags is only part of the environmental question. eg: Cloth bags can be washed with the normal wash / plastic, no matter how many times used, still ends up as environmental waste. This question almost seems to be irrelevant. Customers will reuse and reuse, cloth bags for years. There is no question about the need to produce life-long bags as we did in the past (in my lifetime). Plastic needs to be more expensive (this would help offset the damage to the environment too of extracting fossil fuels). The whole cycle of life of the bag should be considered. Where possible, synthetic fabrics should be avoided in the production of cloth bags, as these too do not biodegrade readily, however, if well made, they would last many lifetimes. Awareness of a personal change of attitude and more care is necessary.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

Change of our attitude - no we are NOT too busy to care for the future of our children. Food scraps should be composited - about one third to half our kitchen waste; multi-layered paper bags could be used for other kitchen waste. (Some years ago, even our council rubbish bags were of strong multi-layered paper - we could go back to this). Yes, plastic bags can be useful for wet bathing

suits, etc. We do need plastic bags, but they should be for specific long-term purposes - washed when necessary and reused. To find solutions we need to return to the old ways - we managed then and we can manage again.

**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**

Retailers have records of their purchases of all plastic bags - they could report to the Ministry. Surely it will be obvious - we will see the difference in our environment.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

Plastic bags are the start of the war on plastic. It is appalling that in my lifetime there has been increasing introduction of plastic and the throw-away society which, for our young people, has become the norm - they believe it always was! Suggestions: Firstly, as planned, remove single-use, takeaway customer bags; Secondly remove easy-to-remove plastic bags from all areas of supermarkets and replace with brown paper bags eg: nut/seeds/vegs/fruit/muffins and cakes. Then extend to items that have plastic trays and wrapping which could be provided from a bulk bin self-service to a paper bag eg: small cakes, etc. New systems for distribution will become available as we ban more plastic - once again return to the past of bulk supplies in trays etc to retailers. FOR NOW: no excuses, just ban the bag in all retail stores. Abuse of our environment cannot continue - Let's take a little more time to care.