

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

Reference no: 6192

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

We must reduce the amount of products we consume on a single-use basis, and foster habits of reuse and taking responsibility for the items we use. Biodegradable bags made from plant-based 'plastics' should be encouraged to be developed as a local industry in NZ, but should only be distributed and used where it is not safe to use reusable bags.

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

I do not believe the thickness of the plastic will help in encouraging people to reuse plastic bags, but heavier/stronger bags are more likely to be kept and reused than thinner bags that too closely resemble the current bags.

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

Bags which are proven to be home-compostable, made from corn starch or similar plant-based plastics. These should still only be allowable under specific circumstances where health concerns prevent using reusable bags. Standards/specifications will be needed and closely monitored.

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

Every retailer needs to show stewardship and responsibility for the products they sell, including the bags given to customers with their products.

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

See above response.

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

Steps must be put in place to help businesses adapt, such as providing grants or facilitating discounts with producers of alternative products. Guidelines will also be needed to help businesses use/dispose of their stock of single-use plastic bags to avoid dumping.

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

Change always provides new opportunities. I believe alternatives are already available which can replace single-use petroleum based plastic bags, including those manufactured in NZ, for a comparable cost to current products. The economic benefits of developing this industry for domestic and export markets will have significant advantages to local business. The opportunity for developing new products, such as reusable bags, also provides significant employing and business development potential. Reduced costs associated with clean up and disposal of plastic single use bags will also be significant benefits to local councils and communities. Social and personal benefits of reducing waste and being more self-sufficient are also significant.

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

Examples of corn-starch 'plastics' which are biodegradable in home compost situations are becoming common and are easily available. Paper bags are also available, as they have always been. Reusable bags are also very easily and widely available, in a wide variety of options to suit any situation, which is a much better alternative to any single-use.

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

National campaign for shoppers along with an incentive scheme by retailers are both needed (form did not allow both options to be selected). Encouraging shoppers to invest and use quality bags which they can personally and culturally identify with is the most effective way to ensure pride in reusing bags to replace the current pride found in being 'rich enough to not care' and throw things away after a single use.

Clause

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

Notes

Retailers not giving out plastic bags, including with home deliveries; Community based sharing of tips and information on using alternatives to plastic bags for things such as bin liners.

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

Systems for monitoring companies which import single use plastics, and those which produce locally, as to volume and type of products made/imported. Improving systems at the disposal end could help to track how much is being used and disposed of, which in turn gives an estimation of the amount coming in.

Clause

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

Notes

Providing funding to community groups (e.g. through local councils) to enable local communities to develop their own solutions; such as community sewing bees to upcycle fabric into bags; to boost the sense of empowerment and resilience through this change from single-use disposable culture to one of local pride and stewardship of resources and environment.

You have elected to withhold your personal details from publication.