

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

Live Green NZ

Reference no: 6199

Submitter Type: Business / Industry

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

No

Notes

To include certified compostable bags in the ban is an obscene lapse in judgment. CERTIFIED compostable bags (such as those produced by COMPOSTIC) contain 0% plastic and break down completely even in a HOME compost. Compostable bags are the SOLUTION to the problem, allowing for a completely circular economy.

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 bags made out of plastic need to be ruled out. Companies like countdown tell people they have removed all plastic bags on replace with reusable one, and all that on offer is a thicker plastic bag. Is it not clear that bag is actually just a lot worse for the environment as it is simply the same thing but thicker/with more plastic. Plastic reusable bags also not only take a significant amount more energy to produce but also pose the exact same environmental concerns plastic bags do, once again if not worse due to be thicker. Compostable bags break down exactly like organic material. Not only that but with an industry wide to compostable food packaging, composting bioplastics is going to become an integral part of waste management, and compostable bags not only fit in perfectly but provide significant environmental benefits.

Clause

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

Position

Not sure

Notes

If this phrase includes compostable bags (which contain 0% plastic so should not technically be included) , then yes they should be exempt

Clause

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

Position

Yes - 50 microns or less in thickness

Notes

We sell 100 and 1000 packs off 100% certified compostable bags. We sell these to consumers and business', both of which love the product and what it can do.

Clause

4a. If yes, please explain how a phase out would be likely to impact on you.

Notes

From a business perspective not only would we lose a best selling popular product, we would also lose and extremely important part of our environmentally friendly alternatives that our business solely provides and builds its brand upon. It would affect all of our customers, those who know and have been educated through us that compostable bags provide a meaningful and achievable solution to the single use plastic bag. They would no longer be able to buy these bags that many will compost in there own backyard, instead having to revert to plastic rubbish bags or other means, all of which will still be 'legal'.

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

Why should a small retailer be exempt? Just because they contribute less plastic to the problem doesn't mean they should be exempt

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

1

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

Not sure

Notes

I am not opposed to government taking the time to get it right. If it takes a year but they come out with an awesome solution then great. My concern is when it takes 6 months + and policy makers are still considering whether or not compostable bags (aka the solution to the problem) should be banned.

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

Assuming that a good decision is made regarding what is and isn't included (ie compostable) then the benefits will far out weigh the costs. The environmental costs is an obvious one that is made redundant upon the ban of these bags, but also the shift to a sustainable circular economy is one that could create many jobs and stimulate a lot of growth within the composting industry alone (which will need to grow rapidly to move to more effective waste management and organic material disposal).

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

I sell them. I own them. Plastic bags were invented for a reason, they are convenient for many different things outside of just taking your groceries home. The compostable plastic bags is a comparable price, provides the exact same convenient benefits, and BREAKS DOWN completely in a compost. It is not reasonably practical, it is 100% practical, it's as practical as the conventional plastic bag - it is the answer to the problem

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

It's not achievable to get the whole population to do it. Even if everyone in nz was 100% on board, the amount of people who lost/broke/forgot their bag each year would cancel out any positive impact that you guys try forecast. The answer is to give the population exactly what they are used to, what they already use and already need in many cases, but find an innovative way to create the product so that it doesn't have the negative impacts conventional plastic does. If you look at the plastic bag ban, the ONLY thing we really want to achieve is to reduce environmental impacts. We don't WANT customers to use a reusable bag, or cardboard box or whatever. They might be potential solution but what we WANT is to reduce environmental impacts. The compostable bag literally provides customers, retailers, businesses, and every body else exactly the same benefits as the conventional plastic bag, with none of the environmental impact. It is literally the answer to the problem.

Clause

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

Notes

Being able to use shopping bags exactly as I normally do so I don't have to adjust, and niether does anyone else for that matter. We all just continue on as normal happily using these bags, but instead composting them after use.

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

Listen to experts on the case, people who are in the industry and know about the products. Look at other countries who have achieved it and how they have achieved it, if your ban includes compostable bags and theirs doesn't why are we including it?

Clause

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

Notes

I hope that my submission has left my viewpoint quite clear. Food packaging is soon to become compostable industry wide. Already thousands and thousands of cafes around NZ have got compostable cups and lids, food retailers have compostable food trays and wraps, and many others are adopting compostable packaging where necessary. We also already have a massive problem with the amount of organic food waste going to landfill. Without even considering the plastic bag ban, NZ needs to invest in its nationwide composting facilities, facilities that include certified bioplastics, in order to start effectively manage and reduce our waste. When we then look at how compostable bags would seamlessly fit into that model then I think it really speaks for itself as an effective and achievable solution. People you should talk to specifically: Jon Reed - Compostic, Tony - CEO Innocent Packaging, Matthew Beasley - Live Green NZ. James Walker from mfe should know all of them.