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Ministry for the Environment,
P O Box 10362,
Wellington 6143.

Submission on proposed mandatory phase out of single use plastic shopping bags

We commenced business here in New Zealand in 1963 and manufacture both paper and polythene bags in our Auckland factory.

At present, we are the only standard paper bag manufacturer left making paper bags in New Zealand and one of many making various forms of Polythene bags for the retail sector.

We also import and buy from locally manufactured sources a range of “single use” HDPE singlet type bags and these account for approximately 20% of our business. Banning them will; have a massive affect on our business which employs between 20 and 25 staff members.

We note in the consultation document it is reported “single use plastic shopping bags under 35mu are imported, so phasing them out is unlikely to have a local business or employment impact related to plastic bag manufacture”. This is clearly **incorrect**, as we know of at least two companies in New Zealand who produce these “singlet” type bags and many others, including ourselves who manufacture a variety of Polythene shopping bags employing local personnel and using local resources.

As a ban on these polythene bags will dramatically affect our business, will there be compensation offered by the Government to offset these losses?

The type of polythene bags we produce are between 40-100mu LDPE and used as shopping bags. To ensure bags over 50mu were still legal would help our business and give retailers an economic choice to the expensive multi use bags suggested in the document. These type of bags are also very easy to recycle.

The document suggests a phase out period where after a particular date it will be illegal to sell or giveaway these bags. Most retailers purchase substantial quantities of these type of bags and could have many months supply at any one time.

What happens to bags left in stock at the cut off date? Will the Government offer compensation to pay for any stock left over?

There seems to be a knee jerk reaction in regards to single use polythene bags and banning such bags which are very economical and useful seems to be an over kill to what in New Zealand is a very small problem.

Paper is biodegradable and if left in the environment will de-compost completely. Polythene is a problem in the environment but their substitute multi use bags as suggested in the document will be a far worse scenario as they cannot be recycled in New Zealand and any recycling overseas is horrendously inefficient. Obviously when they come to their end of life, they will end up in landfill as there is nothing else to do with them!!!

We ask you to reconsider your decision to ban single use plastic shopping bags.

Yours faithfully,

Managing Director