



Proposed mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags

SUBMISSION FORM

The Government is seeking feedback on a proposed mandatory phase out of the sale or distribution of single-use plastic shopping bags.

For more information about the Government's proposals read our [Proposed mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags consultation document](#).

Submissions close at 5.00 pm on Friday 14 September 2018.

Making a submission

You can make a submission in three ways:

1. Use our online submission form available at www.mfe.govt.nz/consultation/plasticshoppingbags. This is our preferred way to receive submissions.
2. Complete this submission form and send to us by email or post.
3. Write your own submission and send to us by email or post.

Publishing and releasing submissions

All or part of any written submission (including names of submitters) may be published on the Ministry for the Environment's website www.mfe.govt.nz. Unless you clearly specify otherwise in your submission, we will consider that you have consented to website posting of both your submission and your name.

Contents of submissions may be released to the public under the Official Information Act 1982 following requests to the Ministry for the Environment (including via email). Please advise if you have any objection to the release of any information contained in a submission and, in particular, which part(s) you consider should be withheld, together with the reason(s) for withholding the information. We will take into account all such objections when responding to requests for copies of, and information on, submissions to this consultation under the Official Information Act.

The Privacy Act 1993 applies certain principles about the collection, use and disclosure of information about individuals by various agencies, including the Ministry for the Environment. It governs access by individuals to information about themselves held by agencies. Any personal information you supply to the Ministry in the course of making a submission will be used by the Ministry only in relation to the matters covered by this consultation. Please clearly indicate in your submission if you do not wish your name to be included in any summary of submissions that the Ministry may publish.

Submission form

The questions below are a guide only and all comments are welcome. You do not have to answer all the questions. To ensure others clearly understand your point of view, you should explain the reasons for your views and provide supporting evidence where appropriate.

Contact information

Name*	
Organisation (if applicable)	
Address	
Phone	Click here to enter text.
Email*	

Submitter type*	Individual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	NGO	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Business / Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Local government	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Central government	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Iwi	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click here to enter text.

* Questions marked with an asterisk are mandatory.

Questions

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?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Why / Why not?

The use of single use plastic bags has adverse effects to the environment, especially marine wildlife. The economic gain by using them as they are mass produced, should be outweighed by the negative effects that the bags will have on the environment. The environment needs to be put into higher priority in order to maintain a healthy living environment and to make a step towards sustainable

living for us and future generations, the ban of single use plastics bags is the right way to start this journey.

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?

- less than 50 microns in thickness
- less than 70 microns in thickness
- Other (please specify)

Although some bags of 50-70 microns are considered multi-use, they are less commonly used as multi-use than that of over 70 microns thickness. As stated in the consultation document, bags of this thickness would need to be used 4-12 times in order to have less of an environmental impact as the single use bags. This is unlikely to be seen often. If all plastic bags with a thickness of less than 70 microns were phased out, consumers would be forced to use multi-use bags. This should not seem to be much of an inconvenience as these bags are currently readily available. Therefore, if all the 70 micron or less bags were phased out, the government would be able to eliminate a significant amount of plastics in one go. Subsequently, benefiting the environment more significantly and quickly.

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?

I am unsure of the different types of single use bags that will be exempt from the phase out. However, I assume this will include council rubbish bags, dog poo bags and other bags where no alternative option is practical. I think bags like these should remain exempt however, as we look forward to achieving sustainability there should be thought put into making these bags more biodegradable to offset the amount of damage to the environment.

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

- a. 50 microns or less in thickness
- b. more than 50 microns and less than 70 microns in thickness?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

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

[Click here to enter text.](#)

5. Should smaller retailers be exempted from a mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags?

- Yes
 No
 Not sure

Why / Why not?

The phase out of plastic bags should be mandatory for all retailers. Making the phase out mandatory for only large businesses would have far less of a positive effect for the environment than if they were phased out outright. It only takes one plastic bag to severely impact the environment and wildlife so the same attitude should be applied to the phase out. Small retailers may not create as many single use bags as large retailers but they are a part of of collective which will continue to have adverse effects on the environment if they were exempt from the phase out.

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?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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?

Six months should easily be enough time for consumers to adapt to the changes of the phase out. Many consumers are already using multi-use bags while shopping, so the adaptation will be minimal. Whereas, those who do not currently use multi-use bags should have sufficient time to adapt to alternatives. The consultation document states however, large retailers may struggle to use existing stock in this time period as consumers will be trying to adjust to the upcoming changes. Therefore, less plastic bag may be used during this period. However, I believe they should still have sufficient time to off load the remaining plastic bags as citizens will be interested in keeping a few for practical use during the phase out.

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

- two months
 nine months

- one year
 other (please specify)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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).

The benefits of implementing the mandatory phase out should significantly exceed the cost expected from the implementing of the phase out. Despite having an initial monetary cost, this should seem insignificant in the long run. If no phase out was implemented, the effects of plastic bags would continue to damage wildlife and natural environments. Subsequently, leading to a point where sea and land clean ups will be necessary before waterways and other natural environments become significantly polluted for consumption of their resources (water, fruit and vegetables). As well as, causing significant harm to the wildlife of these environments. This would likely cost a significant amount more than banning the use of single use plastic bags in the first place. In situations where the protection of the environment are concerned, monetary costs should not be a major focus as the environment and future sustainability is more important to the livelihood of the planet and wildlife (including humans) than money.

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

- Yes
 No
 Not sure

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

New Zealand does currently have sufficient alternatives to single use plastic bags. Large retailers, that majority of New Zealand citizens shop at have many multi-use bag options. These bags are often only priced at \$1-\$5 depending on quality. They are even given out for free when shoppers spend over a certain amount in some cases. This should be considered accessible and practical for all New Zealanders.

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)

- voluntary incentive schemes by individual retailers

- national information campaign and mobile phone app for shoppers
- other (please specify)

Voluntary incentive schemes by individual retailers could be a successful way to encourage consumers to reuse multi-use shopping bags. Monetary incentives is a possible option for this. For example, retailers could offer a discount per multi-use bag brought for the shop or offer a discount after a certain goal is reached (10 shops over with multi-use bags = \$5 off). However, this method would likely only be suitable for larger retailers who can afford to give discounts and rewards. Smaller retailers would have to look for different methods of encouraging the use of multi-use bags. This is where an informative app could be used. For example, a tracking app could be used to show shoppers how many times they have used multi-use bags over a time period and if they are using them enough to offset the environmental impacts of the bags. This could encourage consumers to continue to use multi-use bags, as well as keeping them informed of the progress of the phase out.

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

My family and I have mainly stopped using plastic bags over the last year or so, opting for re-usable ones. Subsequently I have brought some multi-use bags down to my flat so we can use them when we go shopping. I also make an effort to discourage my flatmates from using plastic bags when they are having personal shops, as they will need to get used to not being able to rely on single use bags. However, being offered a single or a couple multi-use bags by the local government through the post prior to the phase out would be great. This would allow us to start to build a collection of multi-use bags. Therefore, when the phase out is put into effect we will already have a collection of multi-use bags to use when we go for shops.

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

Data on the phase out of single use bags could be made more available to the public through multiple platforms. For example, facebook pages, ad campaigns and media coverage will allow the public to be reminded and maintain in the loop of the phase out. This will encourage the public to keep re-using their multi use bags as well as reminding them of the positive environmental impacts of the phase out.

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

I believe that the phase out of single use plastic bags is the perfect start for New Zealand as we look towards a sustainable future. However, in order for the phase out to be successful, New Zealand citizens will need to make a physical an attitude change. This will include, re-using multiuse bags and making efforts to reduce the amount of plastic waste they create. However, most citizens usually act in a way which is most convenient for them. Therefore, by going forward with the phase out citizens will be forced to makes these changes which will positively effect the environment. Campaigns and efforts from the government will allow these changes to be more fluid and will hopefully make the changes less of an inconvenience for the public. I think that this phase out could be a great start for us as a country to look at environmentally sustainable options in other areas and hopefully encourage more environmentally unethical bans in the future.

Releasing submissions

Your submission may be released under the Official Information Act 1982 and may be published on the Ministry's website. Unless you clearly specify otherwise in your submission, we will consider that you have consented to website posting of both your submission and your name.

Please check this box if you would like your name, address, and any personal details withheld.

Note that the name, email, and submitter type fields are mandatory for you to make your submission.

When your submission is complete

If you are emailing your submission, send it to plasticshoppingbags.submissions@mfe.govt.nz as a:

- PDF
- Microsoft Word document.

If you are posting your submission, send it to Proposed Mandatory Phase Out of Single-use Plastic Shopping Bags, Ministry for the Environment, PO Box 10362, Wellington 6143.

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