



# 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](http://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](http://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*	Bess Halley
Organisation (if applicable)	
Address	
Phone	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
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"/>	Community Group

\* 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?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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)

Because this option is more likely to result in reducing the production and consumption of single-use plastic bags. The thicker plastic bags require more j have a greater environmental impact. Considering what we know about people's behaviour, it is unlikely that 'thicker' bags will be re-used multiple times. Thicker

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?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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?

Because we should be striving to remove all single-use plastic bags from our waste stream. All plastic bags have an environmental impact, whether they've come from a small retailer or a large retailer. It will become problematic trying to define what constitutes small versus large retailers, and it will make enforcement challenging.

It is easier to change people's behaviour to be compliant if the rules are simple and consistent.

Rules are only worthwhile if they are enforced. Allowing small retailers to continue to utilise single-use shopping bags will be challenging to enforce, create confusion for customers, and will not aid in the behaviour changes necessary for people to adopt re-usable alternatives.

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?

One.

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?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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).

Absolutely. If we don't act now to minimise the production, consumption and landfilling of single-use plastics, we will be leaving future generations an environmental disaster to clean up. Doing nothing is not an option. We anticipate that there will be positive flow-on effects from the phase-out of single-use plastic bags. In our experience, once people become aware of the plastic issues, they will think beyond single-use shopping bags and move towards minimising household waste overall. This is the type of wholesale change in attitudes to waste we need to see in New Zealand, especially if we are going to continue to cash in on our Clean Green image for tourism income.

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?

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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)

The best way to encourage reuse is to have no alternatives available at the checkout. Once you've been inconvenienced by forgetting your bag, you are more likely to remember next time.

People are more likely to reuse good quality bags that they feel good about using - either because they are a cool design, personalised, comfortable, or handmade etc.

There are many alternatives to resource intensive (new materials) multi-use bags, including recycled fabric bags. Using recycled fabric bags is a good way to minimise the environmental impacts of making new multi-use bags and it also encourages a circular economy by minimising waste from the fashion industry (diverting it from landfill). Other great (lower impact) alternatives include hemp, recycled bouncy castle fabric (see Honey Wrap website) and harakeke baskets (flax kete). These alternatives should be promoted as they have a far less impact than plastic-lined jute bags produced offshore.

Non-woven polypropylene bags should not be encouraged as a suitable alternative to single-use plastic bags because they have such a high environmental impact.

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

Our family eliminated single-use plastic bags from our lives four years ago. It was not a difficult task, as there are such readily available alternatives. By not offering alternatives at the checkouts, people will adjust their behaviours quickly and remember to use their own reusable bags.

I am a founding member of community group Plastic Bag Free Tairawhiti. We have been promoting reusable bags in our community via our 'Flag the Bag' campaign, whereby we offer reusable bags for sale at cost price and we also offer recycled fabric bags created community sewing bees at no cost. We have bag bins at our local Farmer's Market and busy Four Square store to encourage people to take a reusable bag, and return it to the bin next time (similar to the Boomerang Bags concept in Australia). This removes the issue of affordability of multi-use alternatives for the community. Our campaign has been met with a lot of enthusiasm and we have noticed a big shift in attitudes to single-use plastic bags over the past three years.

It would help if supermarkets stocked reusable produce bags for purchase to encourage people to avoid the cellophane fresh produce bags. Many people aren't aware of the alternatives in this area.

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

Regular waste audits of household rubbish bags going to landfill.

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

I am pleased that the proposed mandatory phase out includes 'compostable' and 'degradable' bags. The presence of these bags in the market has created confusion for people, and they amount to 'greenwashing'.

I support the mandatory phase out as opposed to a levy as adopted by other countries. We fully support the Government further utilising the powers of Waste Minimisation Act. We encourage the Government to consider additional phase-outs of other single-use plastic items in the near future.

We urge the Government to use the powers of the Waste Minimisation Act to introduce mandatory product stewardship schemes. This is particularly important to bring industry in line with sustainable business practices and will have the biggest impact on minimising plastic waste in our waste streams. This is considered urgent in light of the stockpiling of recyclable waste products that can no longer be sent to China for processing.

## 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](mailto: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.

**Submissions close at 5.00 pm on Friday 14 September 2018.**