



# 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*	
Organisation (if applicable)	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
Address	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
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"/>	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>

\* 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 amount of plastic affecting the environment has been concerning. As it is too hard to remove all plastic products from circulation there needs to be some initiative taken towards reducing the plastic waste created. New Zealand prides itself on having a clean, green environment. Seeing the positive effects of phasing out plastic bags in other countries makes me

believe that it is New Zealand's best interest to follow suit. Not only will this mean a reduction in plastic waste but it will enable retailers to save money. As knowledge of the effects of plastic spread the world via news outlets and social media, it is clear that we have a massive problem and the world is responding by trying to minimise plastic waste. If New Zealand were to phase out single-use bags it will not only improve New Zealand's environment but will also show the world that it is possible to survive without plastic products, yes there needs to be compromise, but this compromise is for the greater good. With all points in mind, I agree with the mandatory phase out of all single use plastic bags.

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)

I support the phase out of single use plastic bags. 70 microns is classed as a 'multi-use', which technically should be still allowed with the single-use phase out, but I believe these bags are not made to last, therefore they will take longer to degrade as they are a heavier plastic with no more usage than a thin 50 micron bag. I agree that there is a problem with our plastic waste, but the first step forward is to reduce the high damage products, such as the 50 micron or less bags. As 50 micron or less bags are generally used by most retailers their usage reduction will require the most change. Consumers will not be able to rely on shops having bags and therefore will have to purchase reusable bags.

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 believe that plastic bags as a whole are the issue, therefore the majority of them should be phased out. Lighter bags are the worst as they are used frequently and in high amounts. They also have a tendency to get caught in the wind thus not be disposed of properly. The heavier bags such as 70 micron ones should be kept in circulation. Although they only have one use (shopping) they can be used multiple times, whereby they will outweigh their degrade time. These bags are classed as multi-use. Other cheaper, poorer quality 'multi-use' bags such as the 70 or less micron bags are not made to last, therefore should be phased out.

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?

If change is going to occur all retailers need to get involved. Having a mandatory phase out should mean that all retailers have to follow the phase out process otherwise change will be minimal and the phase out will be pointless. Small businesses dominate the New Zealand markets, whereby 97% of enterprises in New Zealand have fewer than 20 employees (Ministry of Business, 2017). This statistic is also true for the retail industry. Therefore if small retailers could be exempted from the phase out change would not occur. By making all retailers follow the phase out, consumers would more likely adjust to the change easier as single-use plastic bags wouldn't be available anywhere, thus consumers would be required to use reusable bags at all retailers.

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?

I do not believe small retailers should be exempted no matter their size.

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?

This time frame allows for plastic bag consumers to adopt to the new ways and adjust accordingly. It would be too challenging to fully cut off single-use plastic bag supply as many consumers rely on retailers to provide a bag for them. Six months is a reasonable time where consumers can remind themselves to invest in reusable bags and support the phase out. This timeframe will allow for existing stock to be used and as stock gets low customers will have to

find other alternatives for bagging. A concern to this approach would be if customers changed to alternatives immediately in preparation for the phase out therefore leftover stock will take longer to be used.

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).

It is hard to comment on the benefits of the phase out as people have different beliefs. You have to account for peoples thoughts on environmental sustainability as well as the relative affordability of phasing out single-use bags for both consumers and suppliers. A cost for retailers is that they may lose customers that are unwilling to adapt to the new ways, but if all retailers have the same rules then the cost to retailers will be limited. Retailers will also save money on bags (unless the offer multi-use bags free of charge)

I feel that the majority of New Zealand's population would support a phase out of single-use bags for environmental reasons. But there is always a small chunk of the population that may not value future generations or believe that removing plastic bags is the best way forward. While purchasing multi-use bags can be a burden on some families, I believe that families will support the change as they are looking out for their children thus wanting to improve the environment for them.

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?

In my experience just walking around retail stores there does not seem too be many reusable bags available. The best place to find these bags is at supermarkets, which is a destination for

most people every week or so. This means that every household will have access to multi-use bags. Many retailers use paper bags as an alternative to plastic bags (free of charge) Another example is Pak'n'Save providing large packaging boxes for customers to use instead of using plastic bags.

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)

It is not affordable for the average household to throw away multi-use bags every time they use them. People will be encouraged to reuse multiple-use bags solely on the environmental benefits. Furthering the knowledge of the average New Zealander on the effects of plastic bag use can be achieved in many ways. I feel as though both options listed need to be attempted. Voluntary incentives will address the majority of plastic bag consumers and a national campaign and mobile app will provide an incentive to reuse the bags while making sure all New Zealanders understand the importance of reusing bags.

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

To have more affordable high-end reusable bags. Other than the price I do not see any issue adapting to multi-use bags.

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

The management and monitoring of single-use bags by having all retailers scan incoming bags and scan all outgoing bags (last stock of single use or new multi-use). This will create a record that can be monitored, graphed and therefore there can be an understanding of the phase out process.

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

While a lot of people use 'single-use' bags more than once for example shopping, lunch and bin, it is clear that some change needs to be made to benefit the environment and reduce New Zealand's footprint. I feel the best way to reduce plastic waste is to start with something that effects all of the population (single-use bags) so that in future years all sectors of New Zealand can support a plastic free country.

Companies that have taken their own action towards the reduction of plastic bag waste don't seem to be struggling to adapt (themselves and consumers). An example of this is Pak'n'Save whereby they charge for plastic bag usage, or as an alternative option customers can use previously used food packaging boxes (fruit, cans, etc). By doing so Pak'n'Save reduce plastic bag consumption but provide an alternative carrying device which does not cause disturbance to their customers shopping routine.

## 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.**