



14 September 2018

Ministry for the Environment, Wellington

## **Submission on Proposed Mandatory Phase Out of Single Use Plastic Bags**

### **Introduction**

The Kiwi bottle Drive welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Ministry for the Environment's Proposed Mandatory Phase Out of Single Use Plastic Bags.

We are a charitable trust (Entrust) and advocacy organisation for container deposit schemes (CDS), with a focus to protect oceans from harmful plastic waste and support communities along the journey to a zero waste society in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### **Submission**

According to research, more than 25,000kg of plastic waste is littered in Aotearoa each day. With the Chinese national sword refusing much of our recycling and industry-led, soft-plastics schemes which have not been proven to work, the amount of plastic waste increasingly going to landfill is alarming.

We need to be conscious of the impact plastic waste is having on the natural environment. There simply is no monetary value we can place on the health of the natural environment including terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, indigenous flora and fauna, the ocean that bounds it, and the natural services these all provide.

We also need to respect and incorporate tangata whenua ecological knowledge and recognise ourselves as kaitiaki of this land. It is therefore of paramount importance that we protect our land, ocean and waterways from the harm plastic waste causes.

The Kiwi Bottle Drive therefore strongly supports the proposed mandatory phase out of the sale and distribution of single use plastic bags in New Zealand. We consider that there should be no exemptions from a mandatory phase out of single use bags. A phase-out must include a ban on false solutions, such as degradable (eg, oxo degradable, biodegradable and

compostable) plastic. It must also include heavier weight singlet bags, lightweight boutique bags, and so called “emergency bags” of any thickness (microns). Reasonably practicable alternatives to single- use plastic shopping bags already exist in New Zealand, such as reusable cloth bags which are already available in many retail stores.

We consider that the phase-out should also be applied across all retailers, no matter the size and staff level of the business. This is the fairest and most comprehensive way to ensure the elimination of single use plastic bags from the waste stream. The phase-out should also take effect as soon as possible (2-6 months).

We agree that the benefits from implementing a mandatory phase out of single- use plastic shopping bags exceed the costs from implementing the phase out.

Yours sincerely,

Campaign coordinator

[www.kiwibottledrive.nz](http://www.kiwibottledrive.nz)