

Your submission to Proposed mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags

Maisie Leigh Hamilton Murray

Reference no: 6307

Submitter Type: Individual

Clause

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? Why / why not?

Position

Yes

Notes

We have an urgent need to address our single-use, throw-away culture. This planet is not ours to pollute; we have a duty to use our knowledge to protect the well-being of other species and their ecosystems. Linear-thinking is not aligned with a sustainable existence; we need to put in place a new way of existing on this planet. Plastic bag bans are not the panacea to the mountainous environmental issues we are facing, but being inactive on this issue sets the precedent that we are able to pick-and-choose the ways in which we are happy to live harmoniously with this planet.

Clause

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?

Position

Other (please specify)

Notes

We should be aiming to reduce our disposable plastic consumption in its entirety. All plastic is a photo-degrading material that will eventually have an impact on ecosystems, whether it be 70 or 50 microns.

Clause

3. Are you aware of types of single-use plastic shopping bags that should be exempt from a mandatory phase out?

Position

No

Notes

Clause

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

Position

No

Notes

Clause

5. Should smaller retailers be exempted from a mandatory phase out of single-use plastic shopping bags? Why / why not?

Position

No

Notes

We need to be taking our environmental issues seriously - an exemption for some is us pretending our consumption and disposal is within a reasonable range. We are consuming too much, we need to effectively and dramatically reign it in.

Clause

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?

Position

No

Notes

Clause

7a. If no, what do you think would be a more appropriate phase-out period?

Position

two months

Notes**Clause**

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? 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).

Position

Yes

Notes

Our existence on this planet, and that of other species, is worth more than plastic bags and shopping.

Clause

9. Do you think that reasonably practicable alternatives to single-use plastic shopping bags exist in New Zealand? Why / why not?

Position

Yes

Notes

Bags made from natural fibres, including from up-cycled materials, are easy to come by at present. Alternatively, canvas bags from the supermarket, or even a personal back-pack or cardboard box can easily carry purchased goods. Hands are also effective in carrying a small number of items - go figure.

Clause

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)

Position

national information campaign and mobile phone app for shoppers

Notes

Once people have learned a habit it is hard to break it - this will become the norm once established, but a campaign supporting this transition would be beneficial for the initial period. A sturdy bag will offset the production, but caution should be taken that single-use plastic bags aren't replaced with an alternative, yet still harmful option. A cotton tote bag, for instance, has lasted me 5+ years, and will likely last another 10 or more. This is likely not true of all alternative options available at supermarkets.

Clause

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

Notes

I helped my parents transition by buying them their first bags, and reminding them each time they left to go shopping to take them with them. Certain personalities would also be more keen to purchase attractive bags - whether that be the material, print, or way it was produced. But again, if the option is simply not there, people will easily transition.

Clause

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

Notes

Please do it! Humans have evolved to where we are today because we are adaptive, inventive problem-solvers. We have recognised the issue, we are aware of many of the consequences - put our brains to good use! We've only had the plastic bag since the 1960s, let's nip it in the bud.