

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

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## Reference no: 671

**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

Plastic takes a very long time to degrade. I feel that using the word biodegradable and compostable plastic is a red herring and a myth. We need to eliminate plastic as far as possible. Elimination needs to come before reuse and recycle.

### 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

All plastics should be phased out. However if thicker (70 microns) plastic shopping bags are available in supermarkets there should be a monetary charge large enough that makes people really think twice before buying one. At the moment Countdown charges 15c for their new thicker reusable plastic bags and \$1 for the cloth bags that can be replaced when worn out. I feel the charge for the reusable plastic bags is not nearly enough. The charge should be 50c or even closer to a dollar so that people are more likely to choose cloth or no bag at all.

### Clause

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

### Position

Yes

### Notes

Maybe bags that wrap meat or fish should be exempt.

### 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

Why is being a smaller retailer an issue?? Shoppers need to get into the habit of bringing their own bags and retailers need to supply cloth bags at a cost to the shopper. They should also stop the habit of just putting the item automatically into a plastic bag. They should not even ask the shopper if they want one.

### Clause

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?

### Notes

This question is irrelevant because the ban should be applied to both big and small retailers. I don't understand why smaller retailers need to be exempt.

**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**

No The public already know the ban is coming and are on board with it. Retailers also already know that its inevitable. I suppose as soon as the bags that are currently available in the store are gone then that should be the date. As soon as they run out in the store they shouldn` t buy anymore. How long would this be? - 1 month 2 months? 6 months is too long. We need to act NOW.

**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**

No

**Notes**

The costs are irrelevant. What is the cost to the environment of plastic in our oceans and elsewhere? What is the cost to future generation and our planet? Too much.

**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**

We already have practical alternatives with cloth bags, reusable hard plastic containers etc. Even the "problem" of what to do with meat and fish could be overcome to some degree if people took their own containers to the supermarket to put the meat and fish in etc. We need to get back to the old style of shopping. There is no reason why meat has to be wrapped in plastic and on plastic trays. Shoppers could take their own containers and staff could serve them the amount they want, or alternatively as in the old days the meat was wrapped in grease proof paper and then in brown paper. Why can` t we do this. We need to shift the thinking and find a solution from the past.

**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**

Other (please specify)

**Notes**

Voluntary incentives and national campaigns are excellent but why not make plastic EXPENSIVE!?

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

Single use plastic shopping bags are yes, very useful for lining your rubbish bin or putting your wet bathing suits in but I think we have to adjust our habits. We have swallowed the myth that we are "too busy" but actually we are not too busy How long does it take to wash out the food scraps bin after it has been emptied into the compost bin. (Every household should have a compost heap.) It would help if we were given new ideas and ways of dealing with it. These ideas always come when the old ideas cease to work or are banned. Human beings are very creative!!

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

This questions could have been phrased more skillfully e.g. "How can we improve the data on how much plastic is entering the market and how reduction is being monitored"? If you ban plastic the we will SEE the difference in our environment and at the dump.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

I think that the definition of single use plastic bags needs to widen beyond the shopping bag. We have other single use plastic such as the plastic bag we pull of the roller at the supermarket for our fruit and veg. These should be replaced with fine mesh reusable bags or lightweight cloth bags. Supermarkets should have these available in the veg and fruit area for shoppers to buy. We also have the unnecessary hard plastic around nearly everything we buy, from a toy to a torch to a wallhanger for my ukulele. We can` t go

shopping without buying plastic - most of it is single use and unnecessary. I think it has come about because the manufacturer wants their product to look good on display or they think that it keeps the product safe. Torches could be packed e.g 10 in a box and displayed on a shelf in the store with a tag (cardboard not plastic) for the instructions. What could replace those little tags on bread bags - a flexible wooden tie (willow)? string? Every time we buy bread we buy plastic. How many single use plastic bread bags are thrown away every day? Could we have a brown paper bag please that could be reused to cover our exercise book or post a parcel or recycled. Plastic milk bottles and drink bottles are also single use. There needs to be a levy on these and a big levy so that we get back to using glass that we can reused if the product is made in NZ or recycled if the product is imported. I think the most important idea is to make plastic expensive and our enemy and to eliminate it as much as possible. We need to send a strong message either through education or an added cost that unnecessary plastic will not be tolerated. It needs to become socially unacceptable like smoking and spitting. There are also too many different types of plastic which makes it confusing when we sort for recycling. There are also mixed combinations of different plastic which makes recycling impossible. There needs to be rules around this. ((LAWS!)) Reducing the number of types to maybe 5 and banning the use of mixed plastics. Make it simple!! Right now it is all too complicated and if the Government doesn't step in and write new regulations and laws it will certainly become even more complicated. Please ACT NOW. There needs to be commitment and movement around the entire subject of plastic not just single use shopping bags.