

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

Angela Hsu, **Angela Hsu**

Reference no: 789

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

If we want to decrease the plastic pollution problem, we cannot rely on manufacturers, retailers and consumers to voluntarily drive change, otherwise there will be very little impact. People are going to continue to want to sell, provide and use plastic bags, therefore outright ban can lessen that.

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

less than 70 microns in thickness

Notes

All plastics can pollute our environment, not just ones which are less than 50 microns. While more resource and energy may be required to manufacture alternatives, these things are renewable (e.g. will complement moving towards a 100% renewable energy goal), whereas plastic will not degrade well and will continue to pollute the environment for hundreds or thousands of years.

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

Being a small retailer is not a justification to be exempt from responsibility of polluting the world. Everyone plays a part.

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

Greater than zero.

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

Yes

Notes

This should provide plenty of time for manufacturers, retailers and consumers to adjust to the change. The change needs to be well managed on a governmental level. I.e. risks need to be considered, and control measures put in place to mitigate risks. E.g. a risk may be that there are angry consumers, therefore the control measure could be the implementation of national campaigns to inform and advise people that the change is coming, and alternative ways to bring home groceries exist.

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

Preventing the use of single use plastic is the direction that the entire world needs to move towards if we want the beauty of this planet to survive. There is no point in a flourishing economy if we will just be trashing this planet to the extent where we and other species can no longer survive.

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

However, systems can be improved. For example, why can't all supermarkets provide used cardboard boxes as an option for consumers? This will result in an improved life cycle of the cardboard box, be an easy way for the retailer to get rid of the rubbish, and allow the consumer to take groceries home in something. Another example is to explore partnerships, such as between the supermarket and boomerang bags rather than the supermarket manufacturing their own tote bags from scratch. Support should be provided to organisations with same/similar missions of reducing environmental impact so that people can work together and gain momentum to the movement.

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

voluntary incentive schemes by individual retailers

Notes

Both voluntary incentive schemes and national information campaigns, and any other great ideas. It does not have to be only one or the other. The more that the encouragement is apparent, the greater the effect we can achieve.

Clause

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

Notes

Knowing how to adapt to a world without plastic shopping bags. E.g. ideas on how to deal with rubbish, or deal with dog poop. Promotion of plastic free alternatives so that we know what products are out there to be used. Also, governmental incentives for businesses to move towards a plastic free environment, e.g. support (funding/branding/advertising) for organisations to develop and move towards earth-friendly products.

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

(1) Litter in NZ does not necessarily end up solely on our own coastlines, therefore NZ coastline data may not necessarily reflect the effect of banning single use plastic shopping bags. Need to work with experts to understand where exactly is NZ's waste impact on the earth. (2) It would be good to understand how this affects the overseas manufacturers. Plastic pollution is not a NZ specific problem. So will our phase out make an effect on the world? Will it drive behavioural change to other countries? (3) Would be interesting to know if different types of plastic purchases increase. E.g. what about the sale of plastic bags with no handles? Or, will there be an increase/decrease in pollution of other plastics due to an indirect effect of banning plastic shopping bags? (4) Local measures, such as waste sent to local landfill or contaminating sewers, should be a relatively straight forward way to measure the ban of plastic shopping bags.

Clause

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

Notes

This is a good start to get the ball rolling on reducing the plastic pollution problem in the world, but it should not stop here. More central government policy, initiatives and support is required for NZ to move further into the clean and green way of living.

