

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

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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

I absolutely agree with this proposed mandatory phase out of all sale and distribution of single-use plastic shopping bags. There is clear evidence that these plastic bags are harmful to our environment and wildlife and need to be removed from our economy. It is also great that you are including degradable bags as many companies selling these bags are merely green-washing; they are leading consumers to believe this is an environmentally friendly option when in fact it is just as bad for the environment!

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

The government needs to ensure that if they are committed to a mandatory phase out they are phasing out all single-use plastic bags. Heavier-duty plastic bags (such as those 70 microns or less) are still single-use plastic bags and still have harmful effects on the environment. The focus must be on the single-use behaviour of consumers not the thickness of the plastic bag. Even if a plastic bag is slightly thicker, it is still designed to be used once and thrown away and in order to meet the government's objective of obtaining a circular economy in New Zealand, this mindset and behaviour of single-use must be changed. If the government does not include them in the phase-out, all companies will simply shift to having slightly thicker single-use plastic bags (and will profit from this since they will likely charge for them) and the single-use mindset will simply continue. The government must be 100% committed to the ban.

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

No, I am not aware of any single-use plastic shopping bags that should be exempt. To change the single-use mentality, all bags must be phased out.

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

Absolutely not - there should be no favourable treatment for smaller retailers. The focus here must be on the environment and the only way to protect our environment and make a difference is if ALL single-use plastic shopping bags are phased out, no matter who is providing them.

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

N/A - should not be exempted.

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

It is fair to allow retailers to use up their existing supply. However, the government must provide clear information to retailers as soon as the regulations are made (or earlier) so retailers do not buy more bags.

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

The benefits are vast - to our environment, ecosystems and wildlife. Many retailers will actually benefit from this as well as they do not have to provide free single-use plastic bags anymore. There will be little cost, particularly if retailers are encouraging people to bring their own reusable bags.

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

Yes, there are many reusable alternatives in New Zealand. They are everywhere in supermarkets and as demand increases (due to a ban on plastic bags) more supply will come into existence as well.

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

Education campaign (to change their mindsets and behaviours), encouragement from retailers. Possibly incentive schemes but education will be more important (even education for younger generations as well as older).

Clause

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

Notes

I have already adjusted significantly. A ban will help further and more reminders to take reusable bags into stores (e.g. department stores).

Clause

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

Notes

It is important that the government recognises that this is an important first step, but much more will have to be done about other single-use plastics. E.g. produce bags for fruit and vegetables at supermarkets, plastic covering foods etc.