

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

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## Reference no: 932

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

The evidence is clear that plastic bags are harmful to our environment, with implications not only for human beings but entire ecosystems. A shift to reusable bags (and I would support those made from natural fibres especially) is well overdue. Though it will no doubt be initially challenging, it will be a very simple adjustment for New Zealanders to make with huge implications in the long term. It is an important step toward reducing the amount of waste we produce as a nation, and could help to change the way New Zealanders consume more broadly.

### 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

At least 70 microns in thickness. A thicker plastic bag might be more suitable for reuse, but ultimately it will be discarded in the same way as any other plastic bag, having the same detrimental impact on the environment.

### 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

There are alternatives to plastic bags available - paper being an obvious one. If the government wants to make a legitimate statement about its intentions to protect the environment, it should not exclude smaller retailers.

### 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?

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### 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**

Not sure

**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**

It's a weighing up of the short term and long term really. Chemicals that are leached into the soils, consequences for sea animals, micro-plastics - the list goes on. I don't think that convenience should stop us from doing the right thing by ourselves, future generations and other species.

**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**

Already many people choose to use cloth bags or paper bags when they do their shopping. It wouldn't take long for people to get used to carrying a reusable bag when they go out.

**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**

All of the above. The same way people re-wear their clothes, they can re-use a cloth shopping bag.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

Supermarkets providing better bulk options and actively encouraging the use of jars, paper bags, and other alternatives instead of plastic when doing shopping.

**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**

Perhaps collaborating with supermarkets and other stores to find out how consumption of products with single-use plastics changes over time.

**Clause**

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

**Notes**

The momentum that this national initiative will create must not be wasted - there is potential to shape discourse about unsustainable patterns of consumption more broadly, to get the nation excited and talking about what they want the future to look like, to educate kids, and to start the conversation on a much bigger issue: environmental degradation and climate change. Collaborating with environmentally conscious and ethical brands in the process would be a great way to create real, positive change in consumer behaviour. The government could partner with local artists / ethical brands or could run a competition for people to get their designs printed on nationally available cotton bags - some of the money collected could go to an environmental charity? I urge the government to get innovative about what this policy could mean in the big picture and to involve society as much as it can.