

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

Reference no: 954

Submitter Type: NGO

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

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

Anything under 70 microns will just rip too easily and won't be reused as often as it should be.

Clause

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

Position

Not sure

Notes

There are compostable bags made from plants, however when they end up in landfill they create methane. Having plant based bags might create confusion (as they look the same) and it would also make it harder to monitor the mandatory phase out of petrochemical bags.

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

It needs to be across the board, you can't measure with two sticks. The environmental impact is still the same.

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

At least six months to what? I believe a maximum of 6 months is better than a minimum.

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 environmental impact of single use plastics is huge. It's not just plastic bags though; it's all single-use-plastic. If you consider the money that councils spend on litter clean-ups (NZ litters 25.000 kilograms of plastics daily!) as well as the effect (land and sea-based) of plastic bags on the environment in terms of animal health, water health and human health, it would be hard to put a monetary number on it. The cost measured would also be a once-off for industry (and I'm sure would create different opportunities) whereas the effect of single use plastics on the environment is something that generations to come will have to deal with.

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

People have brains, they'll soon learn to remember to bring their bags. They can also grab a box from the shop if they need one. Our grandparents brought their own bags, why can't we?

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

By charging money for these bags. If there is a big enough charge then people are less likely to throw them away or even wanting to buy them next time. The charge should be no less than 50 cents per bag. Having a national information campaign and phone apps will help embed new behaviours and create an informed public, but I believe this needs to be in conjunction with a charge for bags. A lot of retailers are already having voluntary schemes such as the boomerang bag initiatives.

Clause

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

Notes

We're fine we don't have them anyway. However education why they're being phased out will be important and showing people alternatives such as kete, reusable bags, using shop-boxes etc.

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

By implementing mandatory product stewardship as well as container deposit schemes. These would allow for data gathering as products are monitored. Having regulations around design of plastics and to ensure that any plastics allowed in the country are recyclable according to the cradle-to-cradle principle. Having container deposit schemes that allow containers to be reused in New Zealand (such as the soft drink and milk bottles used in The Netherlands) rather than getting containers back that still need to be sent overseas for processing.

Clause

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

Notes

Please extend this to all single use plastics. Start implementing mandatory product stewardship for single use plastics (as well as for tyres, mattresses and electronics.) Look at product design; cradle to cradle principle as well as designing products so that they won't leave any toxic residues if they are not reclaimed) and container deposit schemes.

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