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## **RETAIL NZ WELCOMES COUNTDOWN MOVE ON PLASTIC BAGS**

Retail NZ says it's great news that Countdown is moving to phase out plastic bags and congratulates all retailers that have taken steps to reduce the number of plastic bags being issued.

"Retail NZ congratulates Countdown for its decision to phase out single use plastic carrier bags by the end of next year," Greg Harford, Retail NZ's General Manager for Public Affairs said today. "There is increasing customer demand for action by retailers on plastic carrier bags, and we have also seen New World recently launch [bagvote.co.nz](http://bagvote.co.nz) to ask its customers whether or not it should introduce a charge on bags. A number of other retailers have also taken action, and we think this will increase over time.

"Ultimately, retailers will be led by their customers. Customers have traditionally expected a bag when they go shopping, but there seems to have been a change in public opinion, and retailers are responding to that.

"Industry action should not be seen as an excuse by Government to dodge its responsibilities, however. Ultimately, it's important that any solution regarding plastic bags is universal, and applies to all retailers. Many businesses in the retail sector are trying hard to reduce their environmental impacts, and Government leadership through regulation is still required to ensure that there is a clear, consistent and universal approach across the sector."

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