



MEDIA RELEASE
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PLASTIC BAG BAN GOOD NEWS FOR ENVIRONMENT - RETAIL NZ

Retail NZ has welcomed today's confirmation that the Government is moving to phase out plastic bags over the coming months.

"Retail NZ has previously welcomed Government leadership on the issue of single-use plastic carrier bags, and it is good news for the environment and the country that the Government is now formalising its proposals to phase them out," Retail NZ's GM Public Affairs Greg Harford said today. "Retailers large and small have been working hard over time to reduce or eliminate the number of plastic carrier bags being issued, and the formalisation of the phase out will ensure that there is a level playing field right across the retail sector.

"New Zealanders are concerned about the environment and the impacts of plastic pollution on marine life. We have seen a big rise in the number of customers taking their own reusable bags to the shops, so the phase-out will lock in the benefits of this into the future.

"Some retailers will be left with unused plastic bags following the six month transition window. It may be a challenge to ensure that these are used or disposed of in an appropriate way, and we will be discussing this further to seek clarity over the coming months, to get the best environmental outcomes.

"Retail NZ also endorses the Government's decision to include so-called compostable, biodegradable and degradable bags in the phase out. These products can still cause environmental harm, and we do not have the proper infrastructure in New Zealand to ensure that even compostable bags are dealt with at scale."

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