



CORD-228

24th November 2023

Jim Coulston
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Tēnā koe Jim,

Thank you for your correspondence of 27 October 2023 regarding the phasing out of hard-to-recycle and single-use plastics, and your data request on the effect of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) packaging bans on recycling and recovery rates.

The scope of the proposed ban on PVC packaging in New Zealand is limited to food and drink packaging only. PVC and rigid polystyrene packaging used for medical purposes is not intended to be captured by the policy. You can find more information about the plastics phase-outs here: <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/areas-of-work/waste/plastic-phase-out/>.

Part of the rationale for the plastic phase-outs was that PVC containers were contaminating higher value plastic streams and reducing the efficacy of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) recycling.

In October 2022, the first tranche of plastics phase outs regulations banned some hard-to-recycle PVC, including PVC pre-formed food trays and containers. Since PVC meat trays were phased out, more household recycling collections are (or will shortly be) accepting PET trays.

Market participants have noted a recent increase in recovered PET. However, this increase cannot be attributed to the 2022 ban alone. This has occurred alongside a general industry shift away from hard-to-recycle packaging improvements to our recycling infrastructure and systems. We anticipate there will be improved data and reporting on these findings in the next two to three years.

The third tranche of the plastics phase out will come into effect in July 2025 and is intended to see all other PVC and rigid polystyrene food and drink packaging phased out. This year, the Ministry has been engaging with impacted business and industry stakeholders to understand their progress towards achieving the mid-2025 bans. This work will continue next year to inform the development of regulations required to support the third tranche phase outs and will need to give consideration to challenges such as the availability of suitable alternatives as you raise in your letter.

Nāku noa, nā,

James Palmer
Secretary for the Environment