



# Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee

## Minute of Decision

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### Phasing Out Hard-to-Recycle and Certain Single-Use Plastics: Release of Consultation Document

Portfolio Associate Environment (Hon Eugenie Sage)

On 23 July 2020, the Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee:

#### General

- 1 **noted** that the government has a broad waste/resource efficiency work programme underway, which aims to build an effective and resilient system for reducing, recycling and managing our waste responsibly;
- 2 **noted** that in response to the Rethinking Plastics in Aotearoa New Zealand report, work is underway to develop a national action plan and advice on high priority items, including standardising kerbside collection and enabling recycling labelling on packaging, with a report back on progress, scheduled for consideration by the Cabinet Economic Development Committee on 29 July 2020;
- 3 **noted** that there is an opportunity to improve the plastic waste management system and reduce harm to the environment by taking action to phase out certain types of hard-to-recycle plastics and single use items;
- 4 **noted** that the Waste Minimisation Act 2008 requires that adequate consultation is undertaken with persons or organisations who may be significantly affected by regulations (s 23(3)(b)(i)), prior to regulations being made;
- 5 **noted** that work is under way to consider potential implications to our international obligations, so it can be considered when final policy proposals are considered;

#### Polyvinyl chloride and Polystyrene plastic packaging

- 6 **noted** that the use of packaging made from polyvinyl chloride and polystyrene negatively affects New Zealand's resource recovery system and causes environmental harm;
- 7 **agreed** to publicly consult on a mandatory, progressive phase out of food and beverage plastic packaging made from polyvinyl chloride and polystyrene, and all packaging made from expanded polystyrene, via regulation subject to meeting the requirements of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008, and the outcome of public consultation;

- 8 **agreed** that the consultation document Reducing the impact of plastic on our environment: moving away from hard-to-recycle plastics and single-use plastic items, attached to the paper under ENV-20-SUB-0027 will propose phase out timing as follows:
- 8.1 all PVC and some polystyrene food and beverage packaging (details to be confirmed), by January 2023;
- 8.2 all other types of food and beverage plastic packaging made from polystyrene and all plastic packaging made from expanded polystyrene by January 2025;

### Oxo-degradable plastics

- 9 **noted** that oxo-degradable plastics degrade into microplastics and cannot be recycled or composted, causing contamination of the waste stream and environmental harm;
- 10 **agreed** to publicly consult on proposals for a mandatory phase out of the sale and manufacture of all types of oxo-degradable plastics via regulation subject to meeting the requirements of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008, and the outcome of public consultation;
- 11 **agreed** that the consultation document will propose phase out timing for all types of oxo-degradable plastics by January 2023;

### Single use plastic items

- 12 **noted** that the use of unnecessary plastic single-use items harms the natural environment and does not align with a circular plastics economy;
- 13 **agreed** to publicly consult on proposals for a mandatory phase out of the items listed below, via regulations, subject to meeting the requirements of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008, and the outcome of public consultation:
- 13.1 plastic straws;
- 13.2 plastic cotton buds;
- 13.3 plastic drinks stirrers;
- 13.4 single use plastic table ware;
- 13.5 single use plastic produce bags;
- 13.6 single-use cups made from hard-to-recycle plastic types 3, 4, 6 and 7 (including lids and excluding coffee cups);
- 13.7 non-compostable produce stickers;
- 14 **agreed** that the consultation document will propose that timing for agreed single-use item phase outs is confirmed post consultation, but that such phase out dates will not be later than January 2025;

### Consultation Document, Media and Next Steps

- 15 **agreed** to release the attached consultation document, (adjusted if necessary in line with Cabinet decisions);

- 16 **authorised** the Associate Minister for the Environment (Hon Eugenie Sage) to make changes needed to the consultation document in line with the policy intent outlined in the paper under ENV-20-SUB-0027 and in accordance with Cabinet decisions;
- 17 **agreed** that the consultation document will be published on the Ministry for the Environment website in the week beginning 3 August 2020 and that consultation will run for approximately 12 weeks until the week beginning 26 October 2020;
- 18 **noted** that:
- 18.1 the Ministry for the Environment will engage with targeted stakeholder groups to seek feedback on the proposals in the weeks prior to the General Election;
- 18.2 in the weeks following the General Election, the Ministry for the Environment will encourage engagement with the broader public;
- 19 **noted** that the Associate Minister for the Environment (Hon Eugenie Sage) intends to release a media announcement to accompany the public consultation, with details to be confirmed with the office of the Prime Minister;
- 20 **noted** that the Associate Minister for the Environment (Hon Eugenie Sage) will report back to the Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee on the outcomes of the consultation and, if appropriate, seek policy decisions.

Vivien Meek  
Committee Secretary

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**Present:**

Hon Grant Robertson  
Hon David Parker (Chair)  
Hon Stuart Nash  
Hon Shane Jones  
Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Hon Damien O'Connor  
Hon James Shaw  
Hon Eugenie Sage

**Officials present from:**

Office of the Prime Minister  
Officials Committee for ENV

Proactively released