



PE1535/D

Public Petitions Clerks
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
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Dear Public Petitions Committee,

Zero Waste Scotland support the Scottish Government's decision to introduce a minimum charge of 5p on all single use carrier bags, regardless of material type, as of 20 October 2014.

Similar policy measures in other parts of the United Kingdom, namely Wales and Northern Ireland, have resulted in a significant reduction in the number of bags issued, around 80% and 70% respectively. England is expected to introduce Regulations implementing a charge in early 2015.

The charge is deliberately material-neutral, to discourage switching to bags manufactured from other material types and encourage bag reuse. The rationale for this, is by looking at all of the environmental impacts of these items, from production to disposal, then reuse is the best environmental outcome regardless of the material the bag is made from. Further information can be found in the Environment Agency's Life Cycle Analysis report - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/291023/scho0711buan-e-e.pdf

For this reason, Zero Waste Scotland believes a charge on single-use bags of all material types is a more effective measure than an outright ban on plastic bags alone.

Zero Waste Scotland has worked with retailers in implementing these new Regulations and provided support in helping encourage their customers to reuse bags. Early indications are that this is having an impact in Scotland and we will continue to support the sector, in reducing bag use further and encouraging the donation of net proceeds to good causes.

The Scottish Parliament retains the power to vary this charge in future, if required, and Zero Waste Scotland believe that this is sufficient, to deliver the best environmental outcome and also achieve the proposed EU Circular Economy target of reducing plastic bag use by 80% by 2019.

Regards

Iain Gulland
Chief Executive