



W. Buchanan

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Manager, Plastic Bag Ban
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation
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Dear Sir/Madam,

The forthcoming ban on lightweight plastic bags.

Summary

1. The reasons for the ban could better be understood if explained in terms that the broad WA population can understand – especially when ignoring the fact that other plastic bags, both shopping bags and bin liners, will be required.
 2. The use of plastic bags to wrap compostable items may mean increased plastic bag purchase and use. The alternative of newspaper wrappings can have other negative effects – less paper recycled = more trees cut down..
 3. Virtually all plastic and wrapping materials used in supermarkets should be recyclable and the terms 'biodegradable' and 'compostable' should mean precisely that in a more strict sense than at present.
 4. More centralised waste treatment facilities with the ability to better sort diverse waste materials might be one answer to getting more effective and environmentally sustainable waste disposal. There may be a case to linking these larger facilities to manufacturing products from the waste materials. Note well that China is reducing its waste imports and, that this may have opportunities for Australia.
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- So-called lightweight plastic shopping bags have the obvious use in holding purchases from supermarkets, etc., with a less obvious use as linings for in-house rubbish bins which may be found in most kitchens and in many bathrooms. Much of what goes into the larger kerbside bins is waste with high moisture contents which, if not sealed in some way, will encourage insects including fruit flies, house flies and wasps/hornets. It will also mean that householders will have to wash out the garbage kerbside bins each time they are emptied.
 - A direct consequence of banning lightweight plastic bags is that many householders will purchase heavier, more durable but still single use bags as liners for the in-house rubbish bins. Alternately, they may use newspaper to wrap rubbish such as food scraps or other moist materials. In fact, plastic bin liners of varying sizes are sold in most supermarkets such that they (the supermarket) will save by not supplying lightweight plastic shopping bags and also profit from increased sales of bin liners. However, it should be possible and even advisable to ban the sales of most plastic bags and even plastics used in

supermarkets that are not compostable or recyclable.

- The advent of separate roadside-collection bins for compostable waste was recently advertised with the comment that the waste should be put in plastic bags before being put into the bin – another increased demand for plastic bags that could have been avoided if the lightweight bags were still available. The suggestion that newspapers could be used to wrap waste assumes that everyone actually gets a newspaper and, that the removal of waste newspapers from recycling bins has no negative impact.
- For example, one USA report on Black Newsprint Inks notes that "In summary, results of these studies indicate that topical administration of black newsprint inks and mineral oils produces local toxicity at the site of application in mice; toxic effects on the skin in this species are consistent with those of a primary cutaneous irritant. In rats, possible evidence for toxicity was limited to decreased body weight gains in females treated with letterpress ink formulations." Another publication in referring to Petroleum-Based Inks states ... "Because they dry faster than vegetable-based inks, petroleum-based inks have become the widespread standard in the printing industry. Even soy-based ink and other partially biodegradable inks contain petroleum-based additives, according to one study by the Environmental Protection Agency. Petroleum and its chemical derivatives, however, consist of inorganic compounds such as heavy metals and minerals that are not biodegradable."
- The use of soy inks has markedly reduced (perhaps not eliminated) concerns regarding toxicity of newsprint and coloured or glossy newsprint has been highlighted as something to avoided. On the subject of compliance with organic gardening, the Permaculture Research Institute noted "Though soybean oil is a much safer alternative to toxic heavy metals, organic farmers have now faced the question of GM use in the soybeans used for this oil. Since GMO use is widespread and undesirable to organic farmers due to its carcinogenic effects, this adds a questionable bullet point to the debate, one that is unfortunately shrouded in uncertainty."
- There is a seemingly marked reluctance (which could be better explained to the public) to reduce the amounts of non-recyclable plastics, paper-plastic composites, disposable diapers and sanitary wares, light bulbs, etc. This needs to be considered from the manufacturer's viewpoint but some levy could be introduced to subsidise the operation of recycling facilities which can deal with a far more diverse range of waste. There may be an argument for send all waste into one or more centralised facilities where it would be separated into landfill, recyclables and composts, or some similar grouping.

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Sent: 6/01/2018 6:40 PM

The following recipient(s) cannot be reached:

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Yours sincerely,



Bill Buchanan