

Dear Committee

I write in support of the proposed Bill.

When walking along my local beaches and lagoons, I am struck by the sheer volume of single use plastic packaging which forms litter, choking our rivers, beaches, and oceans. This impacts on the health of our marine environments and animals which reside there, but also the health of humans as the consequences of ingesting micro-plastics in our food become better known as endocrine blockers.

At the moment, our recycling industry is in a crisis. There is no demand for most of the single use plastic waste being generated, and parts of the industry is commercially unviable as demonstrated by closures such as SKM Recycling.

Many companies generate profits from products sold which are packaged in, or contain, single use plastics. However, this cost does not include the price of the end of life for that product, which is paid for by future generations, who will live in a world where there is resource depletion of the materials used to make plastics, micro-plastics contamination, and litter. The cheap cost of plastic largely does not reflect its true cost in disposal, reuse, and recycling. The cheap cost of plastic also creates fewer barriers to its unnecessary or unwanted generation of plastic goods, such as unwanted marketing materials that are cheap to make and not the problem of the person generating them to dispose.

In the vast majority of instances, there are alternatives which currently exist to plastics. Whether its reusing containers, or creating a mechanism to incentivise manufacturers to reuse plastics they generate, as a policy goal we should work towards closing the loop between products generated, and products used, so there is a closed circle and no necessity to continue depleting natural resources.

A product stewardship scheme is one meaningful contribution towards closing the loop, and establishing a circular economy. It ought to discourage the thoughtless or unnecessary generation of plastic and packaging waste, and where generated, require that those profiting contribute towards the cost of closing the loop. This will in turn contribute to a more viable and sustainable industry for recycling companies and processors, with more certainty as to income for their activities, and demand for resources they recover.

It is unfair for taxpayers in future generations to subsidise the private profits of this generation, as the burden will fall on them to clean up beaches and oceans, and to deal with the health and ecological consequences of micro-plastics contamination.

Kind regards

Kristyn Glanville