

Consumer Council's Submission on Product Eco-responsibility (Plastic Shopping Bags) Regulation

1. The Consumer Council ("CC") is pleased to make the following submission on the Regulation.
2. The Regulation provides for the implementation details of the environmental levy scheme on plastic shopping bags which have greater implication to retailers. CC nevertheless would like to raise an issue which impacts on consumers.
3. The Regulation provides that the Director, on approving an application for registration as registered retailer, will issue to the retailer concerned a certificate of registration in respect of each registered retail outlet. Whilst the Regulation imposes obligations on registered retailers such as record keeping and payment of levies, there is no obligation on them to identify themselves as registered retailers to patrons of the registered retail outlets. CC is concerned that consumers or tourists may be confused as to whether they will be required to pay for shopping bags provided at individual outlet. On the other hand, the absence of means of identification may leave room for exploitation and abuse, as it makes it possible for unscrupulous retailers to charge for plastic bags provided to consumers at non-registered retail outlets and make a profit therefrom without being accountable for payment of the levy. CC therefore recommends that registered retailers be required to identify their status to the consumers by display of a logo or other means of identification in a conspicuous manner at prominent places in registered retail outlets to alert consumers that levy will be collected for shopping bags provided.
4. Meanwhile, measures should be taken to encourage consumers to bring their own shopping bags and practise plastic bags recycling. Territory-wide publicity campaigns on using fewer plastic bags and not taking more plastic bags than required from non-registered outlets such as wet markets are required to maintain the momentum for waste reduction.

Consumer Council

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