

A Bill for an Act relating to a Single-Use Plastics Tax Bill 2020.

To be enacted by the YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament;

Single-Use Plastics Tax Bill 2020

A Bill for an Act to impose tax on the production of single-use plastics (SPP), to be paid by registered manufacturers distributing within Victoria. The taxation amount will be determined by the weight of plastic components of SPP produced per financial year; the revenue from this tax will be deposited into the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (the Department)'s Sustainability Fund. In addition, the Bill seeks to establish a Single-Use Plastic Tax Board to sit within the Department with the responsibility to raise awareness regarding the tax and related issues.

This Bill was proposed in recognition of the growing prominence of global warming issues and marine pollution due to common unsustainable practices such as the increasing manufacturing and consumption of plastic products. Australia generates more than 300 million tonnes of plastic waste each year and this figure is expected to double by 2030.¹ The Ferguson Foundation, a Washington, DC-area nonprofit group that organizes cleanup efforts in and around the Potomac River, found that implementation of a 5-cent fee in 2010 on single-use bags, the number of plastic bags removed dropped by above 50%.² This indicates that this Bill would be successful in lowering general consumption of SPP. The aim of this Bill is to discourage the consumption of single-use plastics, through the implementation of a compulsory tax on all single-use plastic products, in favour of reusable alternatives.

¹ Kilver, N., 2019. *Rate Of Plastic Pollution Is Predicted To Double By 2030. Here Are The Ways We Can Stop It.* [online] Abc.net.au. Available at: <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-03-05/single-use-plastic-ban-wwf-report/9918870>> [Accessed 13 August 2020].

² Lawson, J., 2015. *The Data Proves The DC Bag Fee Is Working.* [online] Ggwash.org. Available at: <<https://ggwash.org/view/38159/the-data-proves-the-dc-bag-fee-is-working>> [Accessed 16 August 2020].

PART I—Preliminary

Clause 1 Purpose

The main purposes of this Act are—

- (a) to discourage the consumption of single-use plastics through the implementation of a compulsory manufacturers' tax on all single-use plastic products;
- (b) to promote awareness of the environmental impacts of SPP and encourage community implementation of plastic usage minimisation techniques;
- (c) to support the funding of environmentally friendly practices, innovation and use of resources within Victoria.

Clause 2 Commencement

This Bill shall commence three months after receiving assent from the Youth Governor of Victoria.

Clause 3 Definitions

In this Bill, we define the following to mean—

- (a) **single-use plastic products** means products (or components of products) made of plastic that are intended to be used only once before disposal or recycling. These include, among other items, grocery bags, food packaging, bottles, straws, containers, cups and cutlery;
- (b) **manufacturer** means a registered party in the supply chain that manufactures and distributes SPP to vendors within Victoria;
- (c) **vendor** means a registered party in the supply chain that directly provides SPP to consumers within Victoria;
- (d) **consumer** means a party in the supply chain that purchases or receives SPP from vendors within Victoria;
- (e) **the Board** means the Single-Use Plastic Tax Board;
- (f) **the Department** means the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning;
- (g) **the Fund** means the Department's Sustainability Fund.

PART II—Establishment

Clause 4 Manufacturer tax on the production of SPP

- 4.1 Manufacturers will be taxed per tonne of plastic components in SPP they produce per financial year.

- 4.2 The amount of taxation per tonne of plastic components shall be determined by the Board in consultation with the Department.
- 4.3 This tax will be paid alongside other taxes as required to the Victorian State Revenue Office.
- 4.4 Revenue produced by this tax will be distributed to the Department's Fund as set out in Clause 6.

Clause 5 Establishment of the Single-Use Plastic Tax Board

- 5.1 The Single-Use Plastic Tax Board shall be established to sit within the Department.
- 5.2 The Board shall be composed of members who have demonstrated marketing experience and knowledge of the problems caused by SPP, as evaluated by the Department.
- 5.3 The Board will be in charge of raising awareness regarding the tax and promoting environmentally sustainable alternatives, delivering on the following—
 - (a) producing and circulating advertising materials notifying consumers of the tax before its implementation;
 - (b) advocating for vendors to discourage the purchase of SPP by highlighting the price change and attributing it to this bill;
 - (c) be responsible for the generation and dissemination of advertising campaigns encouraging consumers to use environmentally friendly alternatives to SPP.

Clause 6 Revenue reinvestment

- 6.1 All revenue produced by this tax shall be directed to the Department's Sustainability Fund.
- 6.2 Tax revenue will be used by the Department to encourage environmentally sustainable uses of resources as well as community actions.
- 6.3 Funding allocations will be made by the Premier and the Minister in accordance with the Fund's priority statement and related government policy.

Clause 7 Impact review and amendment

- 7.1 The Board will conduct market research and analysis throughout Victoria prior to implementing the tax to determine the initial levels of consumption of SPP.
- 7.2 Once a year all manufacturers within Victoria will be required to submit reports detailing their current production levels to the Board.

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- 7.3 One year after the implementation of the tax, the Board shall repeat their market research to determine whether consumption of SPP has significantly changed.
- 7.4 The board will examine the effectiveness of the bill and make any reasonable amendments to the tax as necessary.
 - (a) Changes to the tax must be approved by the Department and disclosed to manufacturers prior to the amendment.
- 7.5 The research and amendment process of 7.3 and 7.4 must be repeated every second year to ensure that timely and accurate amendments are made to maximise the effectiveness of the bill.