

KIWI PlasticBag Concern

New Zealand Supermarket Plastic Bag usage Survey Rrport



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Convenor of Kiwi PlsaticBag Concern

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Introduction:

According to government data, New Zealanders use 1.14billion of petroleum based plastic bags every year, which equates to almost each person using 1 bag a day. The aim of this survey is to investigate and understand the usage of plastic bags in supermarkets, and the view of customers on plastic bag reduction.

Methodology:

In the period of 11-2-2007 to 24-2-2007, volunteers of 'Kiwi Plastic Bag Concern' have surveyed a sample of 400 people face to face as they were leaving supermarkets across the country. Supermarkets sampled included most major supermarkets: New World, Count Down, Woolworth, Freshchoice and PAKnSAVE. Sampling areas included Auckland, Warworth, Lower Hutt, Wellington, Golden Bay(South Island).

The Questionnaire:

Survey Concerning Use of Supermarket Plastic Bags

Venue where survey is conducted: _____ Date and time conducted: _____

Name of surveyor: _____

Hello! Abused usage of plastic bags is a global concern already. Different countries like Aus, Ireland, Denmark, Tai Wan, Hong Kong have introduced levy and policy to reduce its wastage. According to a major supermarket, a family can average use up to 10 bags per transaction. In light of this, "Kiwi PlasticBag Concern" is conducting a survey concerning the use of supermarket plastic bags among NZ and we aiming to have a zero waste NZ. We sincerely hope that you could spare a minute to respond to this survey, so that we could reflect your valuable comments to this issue.

- 1 How much worth of grocery have you just bought? and
How many plastic bags you used? NZ\$ _____
_____ pcs
- 2 In general, Do you think cashier have fully utilized every bag, i.e. fill up each bag.
Yes / No
- 3 Did you drive to supermarket today? Yes / No
- 3.a If Yes: Do you think you could load your groceries into your car without plastic bags?
Yes / No
- 4 How many of these bags do you think are Unnecessary?
_____ pcs
5. Do you think that supermarkets are currently doing enough to cut down plastic bag use Or should they do more?
Doing enough/Should do more

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6. Do you think if supermarkets charged for plastic bags it would cut down the number of plastic bags used?
Yes ---6a No---7

6a If yes, what is the effective price of each plastic bag to encourage people to bring their own reusable bags?
\$0.10 \$0.20 \$0.30 \$0.50 Others: _____

7 Do you think if the government put a levy on plastic bags it would reduce the excessive waste caused by using plastic bags?
Yes / No/Undecided



Information of Interviewee

Sex Male Female

Age 10-20 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61 and above

Are you the family member who does most of the shopping OR do you shop at supermarkets frequently? Yes/No

** End of Survey, thank you. **

Summary of key results of the survey:

- When asked how many of the plastic bags they were carrying were necessary, over half (**56%**) the survey respondents' plastic bags handed out from supermarket were unnecessary.
- At Pak-n-Save supermarkets (in the North Island), which charge for bags, **only One Third** of the number of bags were used per the dollar amount spent, as compared to other supermarkets who gave plastic bags for free.
- **83%** of participants generally **drive** their car to the supermarket - **77%** of these people believed that could load the groceries to their car **without using any plastic shopping bags** – by simply keeping reusable bags/boxes/trolley in their car.
- **80%** of people believe supermarket chains should be **doing more** to cut down on the number of plastic bags they give out.
- **90%** of survey participants believed that **a supermarket charge for every bag** would dramatically cut down the current excessive bag use, and that a charge as low as 5 cents per bag would change their shopping behavior and cause them to bring their own reusable bags to the supermarket. Most people (**44%**) agree that supermarket charge of only 10 cents per bag would be effective.
- 81% of survey participants believed that a legislated per bag levy, similar to the one in Ireland, would reduce the excess waste caused by the plastic bag.

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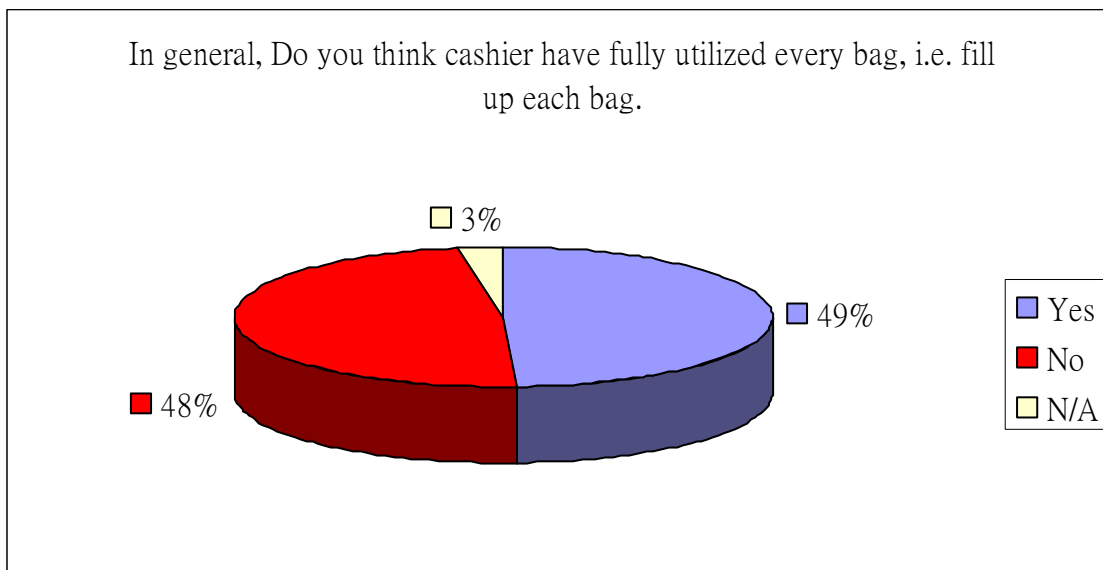
Results:

Q1 : How much worth of grocery have you just bought? and How many plastic bags you used?

For customer from Free plastic bag supermarkets, 325 customer total spent \$421207.25, and they totally used 1363 plastic bags.

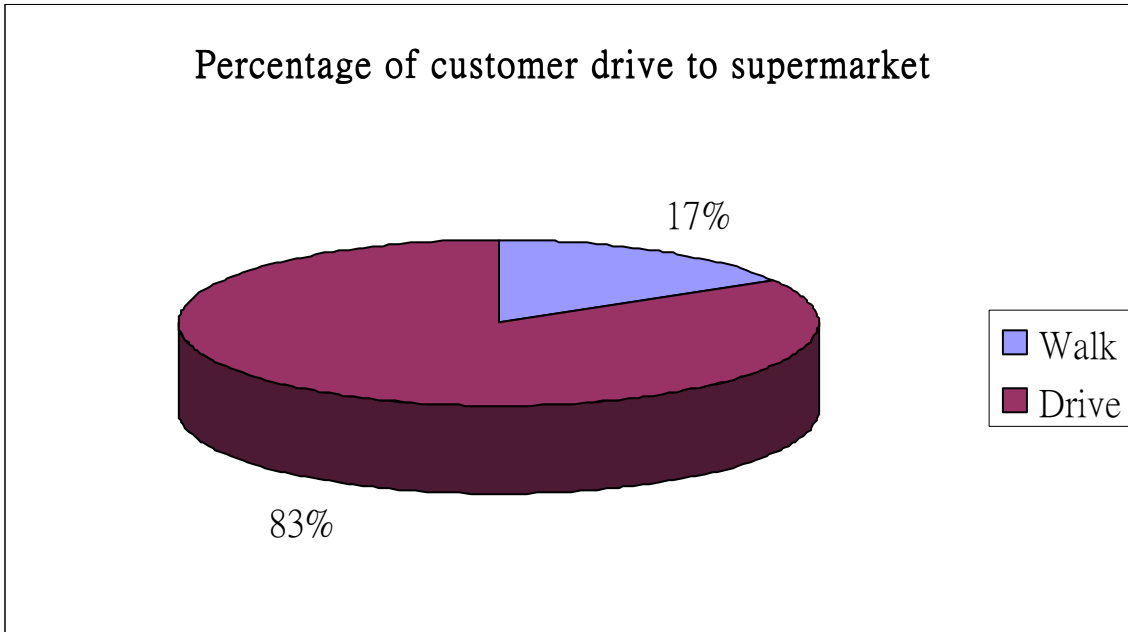
On the other hand, 75 customers from Non free plastic bag supermarkets, they spent \$9517 and totally used 193 bags.

Q2.: In general, Do you think cashier have fully utilized every bag, i.e. fill up each bag.

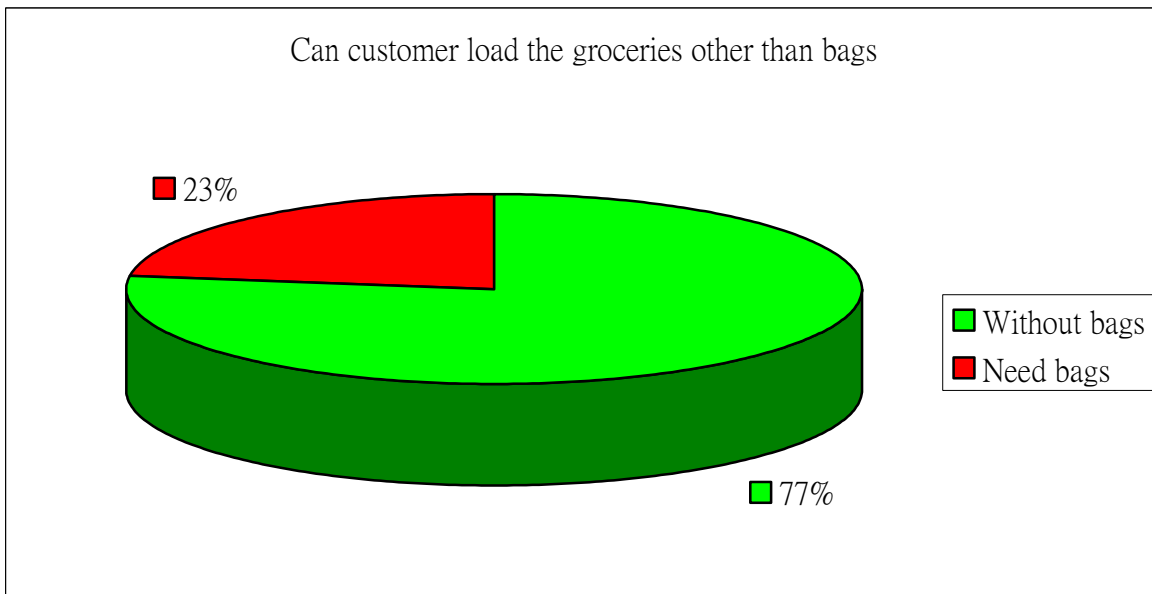


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Q.3: Did you drive to supermarket today?

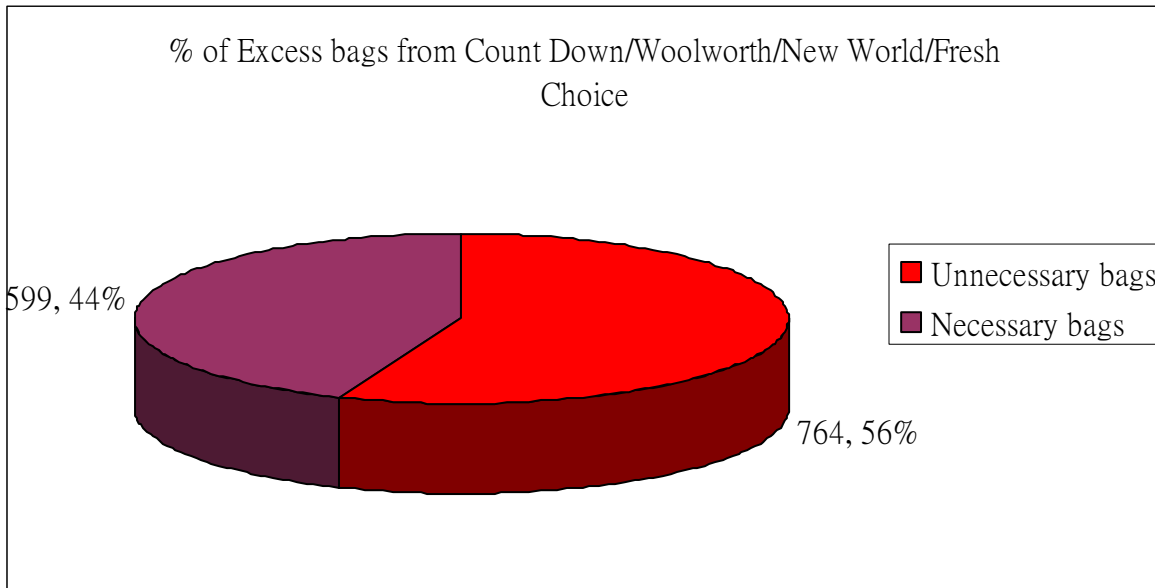


Q3a.: If Yes: Do you think you could load your groceries into your car without plastic bags?

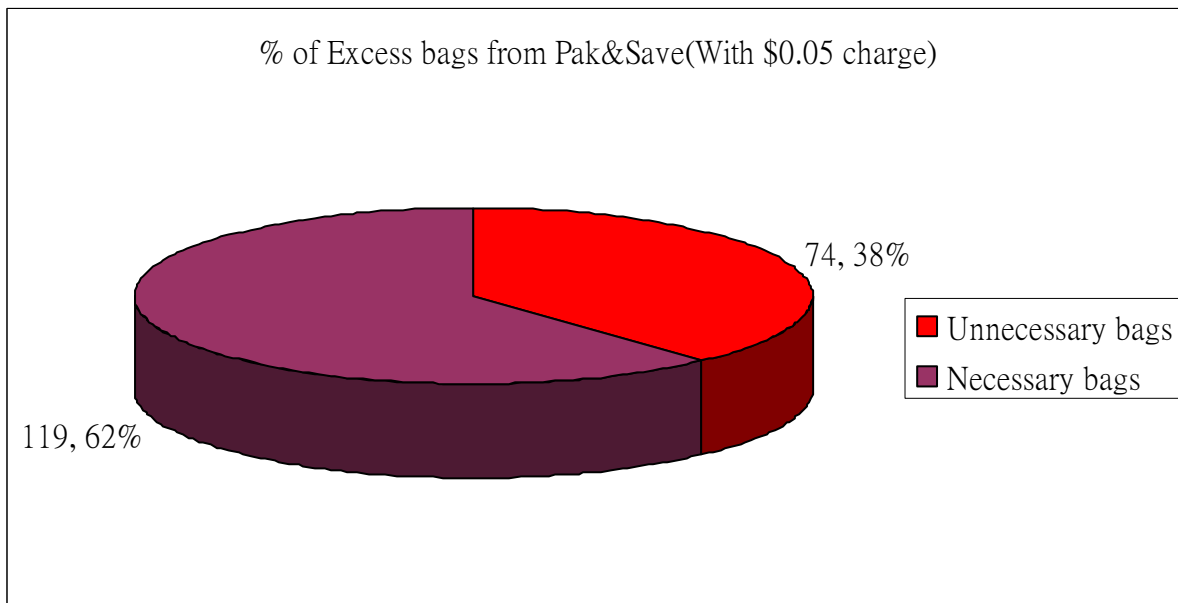


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Q4.: How many of these bags do you think are Unnecessary?

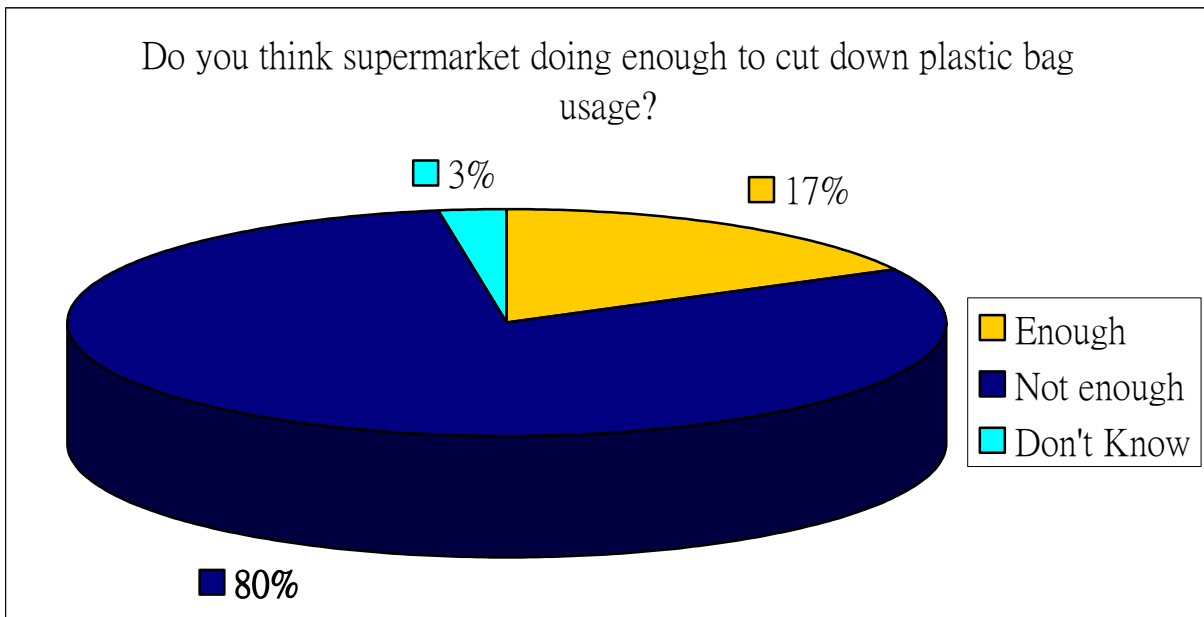


Q4.: How many of these bags do you think are Unnecessary?

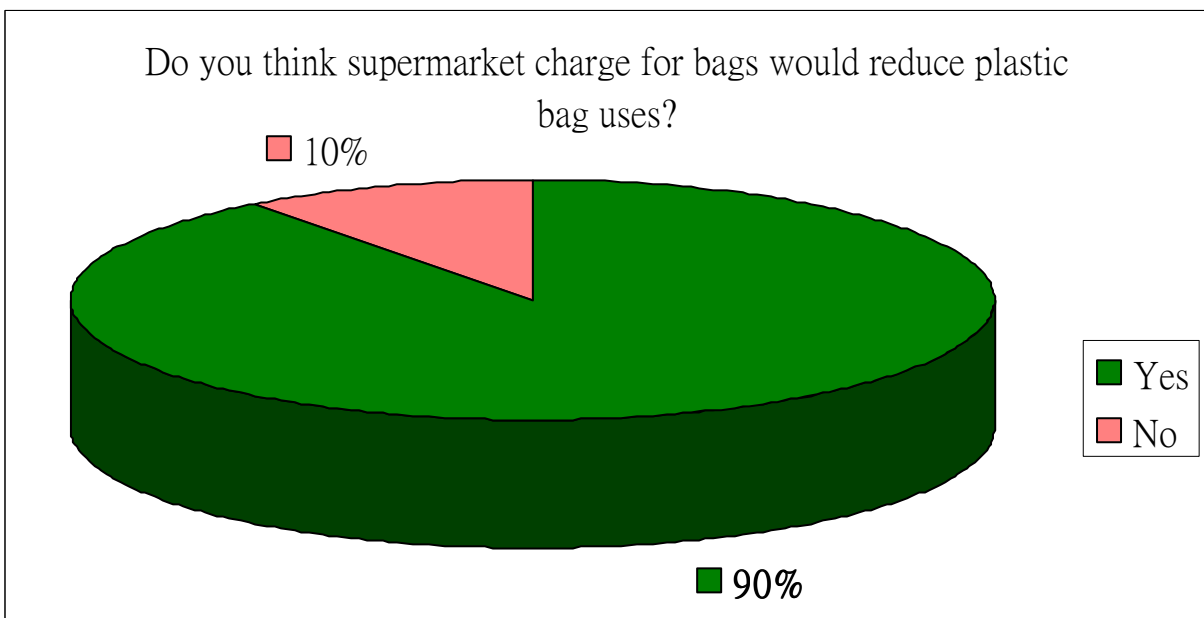


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Q5.: Do you think that supermarkets are currently doing enough to cut down plastic bag use Or should they do more?



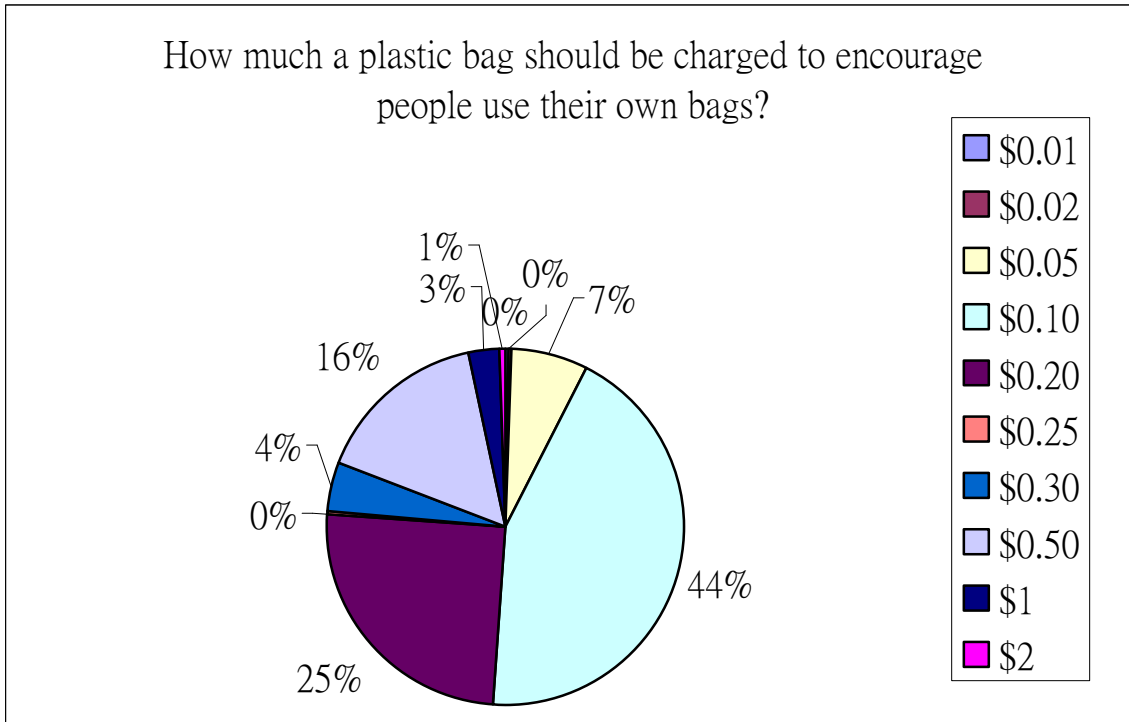
Q6.: Do you think if supermarkets charged for plastic bags it would cut down the number of plastic bags used?



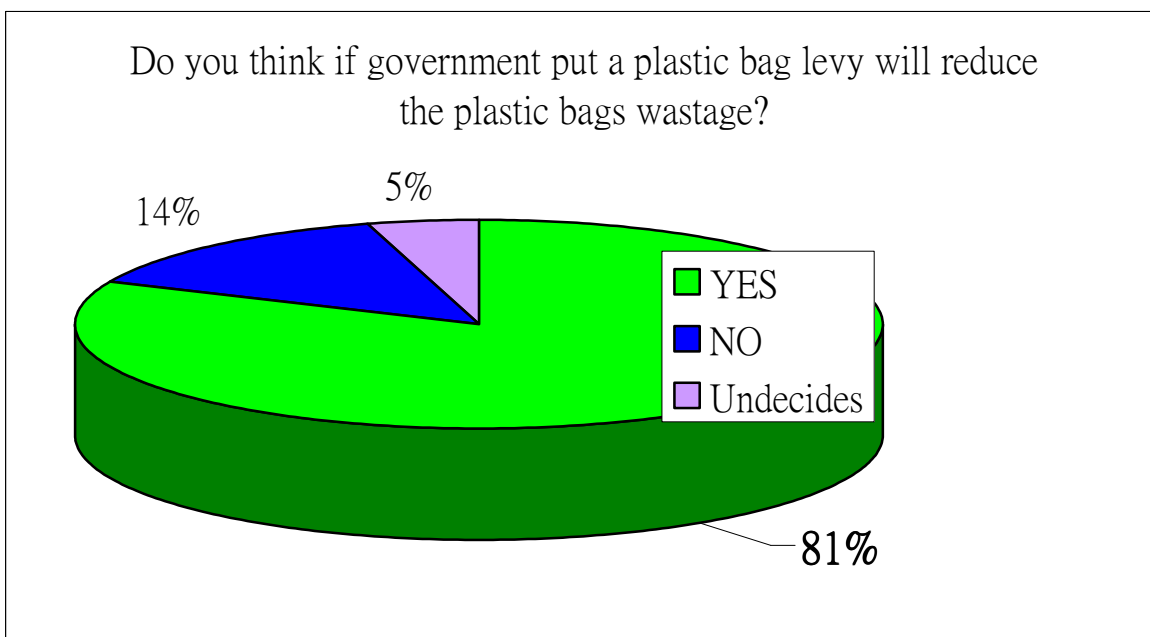
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Q6a.: If yes, what is the effective price of each plastic bag to encourage people to bring their own reusable bags?

\$0.10 \$0.20 \$0.30 \$0.50 Others: _____



Q7. Do you think if the government put a levy on plastic bags it would reduce the excessive waste caused by using plastic bags?



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Conclusion:

Kiwi PlasticBag Concern find the result of the survey show a general abuse of plastic bags in supermarket, and public generally have no awareness of the overuse of plastic bags and its environmental cost behind. However, the customers think the levy would be a effective way to reduce the wastage and at least \$0.1 per bag would be effective. The group has the following recommendations for cutting down on excessive plastic bag waste in different levels:

1. At an individual level shoppers should change their habits and bring their own reusable bags to the supermarket – keeping reusable bags in the car boot or by the front door helps.

2. Supermarket chains should accept their corporate responsibility and immediately reduce their excessive use of bags. This can be achieved in the following ways:

- Training checkout operators to encourage every customer to bring their own bags (BYOB) or use cardboard boxes
- Initiating an extensive education and publicity program to remind people BYOB.
- Providing alternatives like boxes at the checkouts or on the way into the supermarket. .
- Implementing plastic bag charges similar to Pak ‘n’ Save for not less than \$0.2 per bag

3. At a government level:

- Government should reset the Packaging Accord’s supermarket target to a 50% reduction by 2010 and work with supermarkets to reduce their plastic bag use and look at initiating an extensive joint BYOB publicity campaign.
- A plastic bag levy, similar to Ireland’s, should also be seriously considered as part of a programme of activities where waste producing companies are ultimately financially responsible for the landfill waste and environmental costs they cause.

For any enquiry this survey report, please to contact Mr. Angus Ho by email angusho@gsc.org.hk or call (64)021 02798045 / (852)6176 1757, or Golden Bay Bag Ladies, Nicola Basham by email nicola.basham@xtra.co.nz or call 03 5247 733. The survey data is open for public as environmental purpose but please credit the writer.

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Kiwi Plastic bag concern is a alliance formed by different concern organizations including Golden Bay Bag Ladies-the first plastic bag free community in NZ, the bagsNOT (www.bagtax.org.nz), and Angus Ho, Convener of “No Plastic Bag Day” in Hong Kong who successfully lined up 39 chains, 2400 shops stop hand out plastic bags in 2006.

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