



Elizabeth Batten  
Australia Competition and Consumer Commission  
Canberra  
ACT 2601  
16 April 2019

**RE: CTM Application 1852559 Oxo Pak Pty Ltd**

Dear Elizabeth,

Further to your consideration of the above CTM application, the Boomerang Alliance would like to provide these comments.

Oxo-biodegradable is a term to describe a plastic product, usually manufactured from fossil fuels such as polyethylene, polypropylene or polystyrene. Oxo-biodegradable products contain a catalyst that promotes limited product degradation, under certain conditions. However, there is no guarantee, and certainly no evidence we are aware of, that shows that the product will completely biodegrade thus contributing microplastics to the ocean and terrestrial environment. It is a product that will not meet Australian Composting Standards, and is unlikely to be accepted by any commercial composters, as the microplastics contaminate the compost.

The main concern with oxo-biodegradable products is that they are promoted as being an 'environmentally-friendly' alternative to single use, non-biodegradable plastics. That promotion infers that these products are fully compostable, when they are not. The product is extensively used as 'greenwash.'

The application for certification itself perpetuates this misleading 'greenwash' with the inference that if littered it is better than other single use plastics because it will biodegrade, when even the manufacturers claim that it requires certain controlled conditions excluded from the external environment to even partially degrade.

It is therefore important that the product is not given a certification that suggests it is compostable or biodegradable, and any claims to consumers that it is, should be prohibited. These claims are dangerous as they also make it more likely that the product will be littered, as some consumers will throw these products away thinking they are biodegradable.

We note that no reference to meeting the Australian Compost standards (AS 4736 or AS 5810) is claimed.

We note that in the application comparisons are made against non-biodegradable plastics and oxo-degradable plastics but no comparisons are made with products that meet the Australian Compost Standard.

As outlined above oxo-biodegradable products are manufactured using fossil fuels and therefore contribute to global GHG emissions.

The Commonwealth Government, State and Territory Governments and the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) have targets to make all packaging reusable, compostable or recyclable by 2025. Oxo-biodegradable products are unlikely to meet any of those requirements.

Further, it is quite likely, as many Australian jurisdictions consider the phase-out of single use takeaway plastic items, that oxo-degradable and oxo-biodegradable products will be included in any future ban. This has already been the case with lightweight plastic bags in the most recent ban laws in Qld and WA.

Should you require further information, please let me know by contacting me on 02-9211 5022 or



Jeff Angel

Director

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The Boomerang Alliance allies are: - AFROCAB - Australian Conservation Foundation - Australian Marine Conservation Society - Arid Lands Environment Centre - Beach Patrol - Cairns and Far North Coast Environment Centre - Clean Up Australia - Conservation Council ACT Region - Conservation Council of South Australia - Conservation Council of Western Australia - Cooks River Alliance - Environment Centre NT - Environment Tasmania - Environment Victoria - Friends of the Earth - Greenpeace Australia Pacific - LEAD Group - Living Ocean - Local Government NSW - Mineral Policy Institute - Nature Conservation Council of NSW - Project AWARE Foundation - Queensland Conservation Council - Responsible Runners - SEA LIFE Conservation Fund - Surfrider Foundation Australia - Take 3 - Tangaroa Blue Foundation - Tasmanian Conservation Trust - Total Environment Centre - Two Hands Project - Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland

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