

Chile enacts historic ban on plastic bags

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Plastic bags will soon become a thing of the past in Chile following Friday's historic announcement

Chile made history on Friday when it became the first country in Latin America to ban the commercial use of plastic bags.

"I want to share with you the joy that as of today we're enacting the law," said President Sebastian Pinera at a public ceremony in the centre of Santiago, after which he handed out cloth bags to passers-by.

Large businesses have six months to phase out the use of [plastic bags](#), while smaller ones will be given two years to adapt to the new rules.

It means that any form of plastic bag other than those constituting primary packaging "necessary for hygiene or to prevent food wastage" are prohibited, the government gazette Diario Oficial said on Friday.

Those flouting the ban will be subject to a \$370 fine, in a country where the minimum wage is just \$800.

"Without a doubt we're taking a giant step towards a cleaner Chile," added Pinera.

In the meantime, companies will be limited to handing out a maximum of two [plastic](#) bags per transaction.

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