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The State Pollution Control Board of Sikkim has directed the state government to ban the use of plastic bags thinner than 75 microns by the end of this year.

The pollution board also asked the government to slowly phase out the usage of plastic bags with a thickness of fewer than 120 microns to support the plastic-free Sikkim initiative.

The decision has been taken post the meeting involving SPCB with elected members and officers of the seven civic bodies in the state.

The meeting agenda was to discuss the ban on single-use plastic and strategise for the effective implementation of the plastic waste management rules and the consequent regulations.

SPCB has proposed that the state government only permit plastic bags with labels mentioning their specification. SPCB also recommended that the state create a special task force to keep track of plastic use in the state. Single-use plastic items such as earbuds, plastic flags, candy sticks, ice-cream sticks, thermocol cutlery, wrappers, packing films, invitation cards, PVC banners, and stirrers should be banned from June 1.

The board also said authorities must carry out a regular market inspection to make sure that all the norms are being complied with.

