

Submission relating to :

Proposed Plan Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region (Plan Change 1)

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I do not stand to gain commercial advantage from my submission.

I wish to be heard in support of my submission.

My observations are shown in RED.

Requested relief is shown in GREEN

1.

Total Lack of Consultation

Although we live in Kaitoke which at this stage is not covered in this Plan Change, I am deeply concerned that GWRC is choosing to push through the changes in PC1 with virtually no consultation involving those most affected by it.

It is probably only a matter of time before GWRC impose PC1 on us too so I am writing in support of the Mangaroa and Akatarawa residents affected by it. GWRC could not find the time or the inclination to contact them directly about these changes.

The majority of the rural community around the greater Upper Hutt area only discovered the existence of this Plan Change by word of mouth.

I consider that based on a total lack of meaningful consultation this process should be withdrawn and an effective period of consultation should follow.

Withdraw the Plan Change in total.

2.

Contempt of the rule of Law

During the recent Environment Court cases – GWRC v Adams & Others together with GWRC v UHCC the presiding judge was highly critical of GWRC.

Court decisions should be respected. If GWRC did not agree with a court ruling, then they should have appealed. The fact that they chose not to appeal indicates that the ruling should prevail.

Remove clauses that are demonstrably regulating by fiat.

Demonstrate respect for the rule of law.

3.

Contravention of the NZ Bill of Rights.

PC1 is proposing a regime of sanctions against property owners in respect of factors over which they have no control. This concept is totally alien to the NZ accepted concept of fairness and the rule of law.

This concept is unacceptable.

Remove all such clauses where GWRC has failed to establish an adequate network of monitoring sites.

4.

Small farm registration – farms of 4 hectares or more

If PC1 or something similar is implemented for Kaitoke, this affects us greatly.

Landowners are required to provide a complex range of data including average stocking rates. They are also required to calculate effective grazing areas, map the property boundaries, and show waterbodies where stock exclusion is required under new rules and to show the location of fences relative to the waterbodies.

This response shows a total lack of understanding of what is involved and the nature of the difficulty.

There will be very few in the community who will have the level of expertise required to perform the complex mathematical calculations to collate the raft of data required. Nor will they possess the cartographical skills to produce accurate maps, especially given the undulating nature of the terrain.

Whilst GWRC maintain that it is a simple form to fill in, they themselves have not yet produced the systems necessary to record the information.

GWRC also require the landowner to perform calculations relating to Nitrogen emitting from the property. Another simple form and application that has not yet been developed.

It is unfair for GWRC to expect lay people to gather, calculate and record data when GWRC has not yet developed its own systems to receive the data.

A quick look through some of the PC1 changes shows many inconsistencies. I highlight 2 below:

Rule R106 is confusing as it says that clearing trees for firewood (renewable energy activity) would require a resource consent. As every tree type is covered by this rule (including Pine) cutting down an old pine tree for firewood would require a resource consent.

Rule R107 is also confusing. It states that for most earthworks a Resource Consent will be required. This would include burying deceased livestock. This is impractical as a Resource Consent takes time and money. The alternative, leaving a dead animal in the open creates both a public health and animal welfare issue.

Delete the requirement for farms of 4 ha to register with GWRC.

Require GWRC to have the necessary systems and applications in place prior to promulgating regulation that will not function appropriately without those systems.

Confirm whether GWRC staff members have the authority to commit GWRC to a course of action which may be at variance to the letter of the drafted regulations.

5.

Small Streams/Rivers

Within the document there are a number of references to small rivers, less than 1 metre wide,

There is nowhere within the documents that tell us what the minimum size is.

It is unacceptable to have an open-ended definition for a minimum.

Clarify the definition upon which other regulations rely e.g. Stock exclusion and fencing rules.

End of submission.