

# DEFENDING FRESHWATER POLICY. HOW YOU CAN HELP

**THIS INFORMATION SHEET WILL HELP YOU ATTEND YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC MEETING TO DEFEND STRONG FRESHWATER RULES.**

**THE GOVERNMENT HAS PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE NATIONAL FRESHWATER POLICY, AND INTRODUCED NEW NATIONAL STANDARDS ON AGRICULTURAL INTENSIFICATION. THE ACTION FOR HEALTHY WATERWAYS DOCUMENTS SET OUT AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION IF THE RIGHT OPTIONS IN THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ARE CHOSEN.**

**BELOW IS INFORMATION ON WHAT FISH & GAME SUPPORTS AND OPPOSES FROM THEIR PROPOSALS, ALONG WITH QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS YOU CAN USE TO MAKE A REAL IMPACT.**

Consultation documents: <http://bit.ly/water-documents-mfe>

Meeting schedule for updates: <http://bit.ly/watermeeting>

## Self regulation

This is our major concern. It is important that the Government hold firm on imposing regulation, and not fall back to an industry self regulation model. The industry self regulation to date has failed to protect our waterways. More oversight and regulation as proposed in this freshwater package is required and is supported.

## Wetlands

We support that the draft NPSFM aims to increase the protection for wetlands. Since human occupation, we've lost 90% of the wetlands we once had, and we have lost another 13% of what remains in the last 20 years.

- ⇒ We support the requirement to ensure that "The loss or degradation of all or any part of a natural inland wetland is avoided."

- ⇒ We support the requirement of councils and consent holders to monitor the condition of wetlands.
- ⇒ We support the requirement for consent for drainage and vegetation clearance near and in wetlands to protect the value of wetlands in although we also request that the exceptions for flood protection and nationally significant infrastructure are removed.
- ⇒ We support the requirement to exclude stock from wetlands in the draft stock exclusion regulations.
- ⇒ We need to push officials to adopt the bottom lines science group recommended

- ⇒ Forestry is exempted from complying with the regulations relating to wetlands in the proposed NESF. Instead it relies on the National Environmental Standard for Production Forestry. The NES for Production Forestry ignores small wetlands and allows forest harvest activities to damage them. We disagree with this.

### Bottom lines for nitrogen and phosphorus

- ⇒ We support setting bottom lines for nitrogen and phosphorus in rivers to support ecosystem health – they will actually provide for ecosystem health (unlike the ones in the current NPSFM).
- ⇒ Having nutrient bottom lines set at the national level will make a significant difference to ecosystem health in degraded waterbodies around the country. It will also save communities who care about the health of their rivers a significant amount of time and money as this is argued by ag sector at every regional plan hearing, in every region.
- ⇒ The new bottom lines are not too ambitious, they represent a river in ‘OK’, nowhere near pristine. They signal a return to the health of rivers we used to enjoy 20 or 30 years ago and wish our children and grandchildren to

### Hydro-electricity

- ⇒ Yet another exemption for hydro-schemes. We don’t think rivers with hydro-electric dams should be exempt from meeting the national regulations on water quality. This potentially exempts 50% of all the flows of rivers in NZ.

### Trout and salmon

- ⇒ Trout and salmon are valued species for many New Zealanders. They provide a valued recreation resource and support a thriving tourism industry.

- The protection of the habitat of trout and salmon is a matter that all decision makers must have particular regard to under s7(h) of the RMA.
- The draft NPSFM needs to make more specific recognition of trout and salmon to ensure this valuable resource is properly provided for.
- In particular in waterbodies identified in the Fish and Game Management Plan for a region, trout and salmon and their habitat should be:
  - Identified as a valued introduced species next to indigenous species in the description of healthy freshwater ecosystem in Appendix 1A(1)
  - Specifically included in the calculation of the Index of Biotic Integrity in Table 15 (rather than specifically excluded as they currently are), and
  - Specifically excluded from being an ‘undesirable species’ the provisions relating to fish passage (3.17(c)). Merely taking into account the Sports Fish and Game Management Plan is not enough to ensure that trout and salmon will not be excluded sections of river because of barriers to fish passage.
  - We also seek protection across the whole lifecycle, so spawning areas need more stringent deposited sediment standards (<10% cover).

### Timeframe

- ⇒ We support the desire for restoration within a generation. We seek that it’s defined as 30 years, so by 2050. Otherwise Councils will do what they’re doing in Waikato and propose an 80 year timeframe for action (longer if measuring in river).

## One-liner you might say:

- ⇒ To protect what we love, we need strong rules - no more half measures and no more polluter controlled self-regulation.
- ⇒ Kiwis expect to be able to swim, fish and gather food from their rivers, lakes and streams. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to tackle an issue Kiwis are deeply concerned about. Let's get this right
- ⇒ Strong rules are the only way to achieve clean and healthy waterways.
- ⇒ Fencing, planting and farm plans are not enough on their own – they have failed to reverse the freshwater crisis.
- ⇒ There are farmers across NZ that are already farming sustainably and still making a profit; it is time for the rest to catch up.
- ⇒ We need to think of the New Zealand brand with farming producing value added products which carry a premium.
- ⇒ Cheap milk powder brings more cows, more irrigation and more pollution – and it hasn't done well for sustained profit either.
- ⇒ If we don't do this now we are leaving a massive debt to the next generations.
- ⇒ New Zealand farming has a strong history of adapting to change, this is no different.



**Industry-set standards**



**Nationally-set standards**

Kiwis expect to swim, fish and gather food from their rivers, lakes and streams

**WE NEED TO REGULATE FOR OUR FUTURE**