



# Aquaculture Reforms – Resource Management (Aquaculture Moratorium Extension) Bill

## INTRODUCTION

Marine farming is an important industry to New Zealand, and an important part of regional development.

As technology changes, more and more of our coastline is suited to aquaculture and the industry is expected to grow significantly.

The Government is proposing new legislation to enable this expansion, while ensuring that aquaculture in New Zealand's waters is managed sustainably – allowing for recreational, environmental, customary and commercial interests.

A moratorium on new marine farms is currently in place until March 2004 while a reform of aquaculture law is completed. That moratorium will now be extended until December 2004.

## BACKGROUND

Over the past few years there has been increasing competition for space for aquaculture development. For that reason, in November 2001, the Government agreed to reform aquaculture management and put in place a moratorium on new applications. The moratorium allows the aquaculture reforms to be enacted and for councils to plan for the changes without having to deal with large numbers of new applications.

The moratorium, due to expire on 25 March 2004, prevented new applications from being lodged after 28 November 2001 and placed those applications that had not been notified on hold. Those applications that were already part way through the process are being progressed under existing law and rules and will become part of the new system.

The reform aims to:

- streamline regulatory processes to allow greater benefit from the use of coastal space through aquaculture
- improve integration between coastal planning, aquaculture development and fisheries management
- preserve Treaty settlements and the fisheries management regime
- allow cumulative environmental effects of aquaculture to be properly managed.

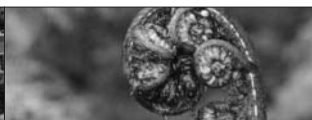
## WHAT HAS THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED NOW?

The Government is proposing to extend the moratorium to 31 December 2004 through the Resource Management (Aquaculture Moratorium Extension) Amendment Bill.

It is important that the aquaculture reforms and measures to recognise interests in coastal space, including Maori interests, are consistently addressed in both policy and legislation.

The Government's proposed solution to the foreshore and seabed issue has arisen at a late stage in the development of the aquaculture legislation. Extending the moratorium will allow time for the Government to ensure the aquaculture reforms are compatible with proposals on the foreshore and seabed.

The Bill will also reinstate marine farming resource consents that have lapsed or are likely to lapse before their renewal applications are processed. It also deems applications to the Ministry of Fisheries for a marine farming permit or spat catching permit to be sufficient to ensure that a consent does not lapse again.



This will apply only to resource consents for marine farming granted between 1 June 1995 and 1 August 2003.

The problem affects only some of the resource consents that are still being processed under the dual regime in the Fisheries Act 1983 and the Resource Management Act 1991.

The Bill will also remove the time limit for the Minister of Conservation to respond to applications for the expiry of the moratorium over particular areas of coastal space.

The Minister will still be required to process applications within a reasonable timeframe.

### **ON-GOING ROLE FOR COUNCILS**

An extension of the moratorium will not mean a halt to work at the council level. Under the proposed legislation, regional councils are tasked with developing aquaculture management areas (AMAs) – or areas where future marine farming projects will be located. This work can and will continue in priority regions (eg, Northland).

**WANT TO KNOW MORE?**

Contact the Ministry for the Environment by phoning (04) 917 7400, emailing [info@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:info@mfe.govt.nz), or see our website: [www.mfe.govt.nz](http://www.mfe.govt.nz)