

Subject: Submission on freshwater standards

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Dear Ministry for the Environment, I would like to make a submission on fresh water in New Zealand. Clean and safe freshwater is essential for life, quality of life and livelihood. I support the swimmable (primary contact) standard as the bottom line for waterways. Our freshwater legislation aims to “safeguard the health of people” however this is contradicted by the current ‘wadeable’ bottom line which allows waterways to be contaminated with four times the safe level of E. coli for people to swim in. Swimmable must be our bottom line to keep people safe Waterways that meet or exceed the ‘swimmable’ standard must be protected and maintained at this level. Waterways that fail this standard must be improved to ‘swimmable’. The current wording of “maintain or improve” makes poor water quality acceptable. Our wildlife needs clean, safe water. The Macroinvertebrate Community Index (MCI) is our most useful indication of the health of freshwater ecosystems. I support the inclusion of the MCI as a mandatory method for monitoring the wellbeing of freshwater life. Regards, Nick Thomas