

Subject: Ownership and control of water

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Dear Sir/Madam I am totally opposed to any form of race-based or iwi control of water. Water is essential for all life on earth. It is not manmade, it results from the evaporation of oceans around the world, and subsequent precipitation over land that may be far distant from where it first formed. It has been a fundamental principle in democratic societies around the world that no one owns the water as it is necessary for the common good. The Treaty of Waitangi guaranteed the same rights to all citizens. Other cultures have legends, songs and fairy tales involving water. Water is used in christenings, and the dead are generally washed prior to burial. All cultures have used water for travel and trade, or as a food source. Water is not uniquely maori in any way. Why would maori have any interests in water which differ from those of other New Zealanders? Or any other person in the world for that matter? The National Party campaigned against maori owning the foreshore and seabed. Why the about turn now? I see no difference between "ownership" and "control" of water. Remember this?: "This legislation will divide our country, not bring it together. This is not the way to build a better future for all of us. National says the foreshore and seabed is Kiwi property. Not iwi property." Involving iwi and hapu in local government just increases the bureaucracy involved for local government who would then have to deal with multiple groups which would likely make consensus impossible. If tribes ever secure a governance role in water, commercial control will undoubtedly follow. After that, it will only be a matter of time before a royalty is demanded each time a tap is turned on. The Maori Council chair has already considered this. Maori control of water can only be divisive. It removes democratic accountability. It creates a fundamental change to the law. There are no checks and balances on iwi control in the proposal. Water should be controlled by central government for the common good and to maintain a consistent policy nationwide.

