

DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY

Submission on the publicly notified draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.

On: Ministry for the Environment – draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.

To: Ministry for the Environment

Personal Information

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Te Karaka 4092

Gisborne/East Coast

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Submission

Here I am making another submission on environmental matters that affect my farming operation. It appears that all my other submissions have fallen on deaf ears because there have been no material changes to the initial draft. This leaves me very cynical that this time will be any different, but I live in the hope that this time the reader of this submission will be truly independent and open minded and not someone with their mind already set on a preconceived notion just going through the motions to satisfy the so called democratic process.

I willingly concede that biodiversity suffered greatly at the time of European colonisation and all the massive land clearance that followed. Indeed, even the Maori had an impact with the various species of Moa being hunted to extinction and the Haast eagle also dying out because its food source was gone. But we have realised the mistakes of the past. New Zealand has a much higher than average amount of its territory in national parks and conservation reserves. On

top of this there is another 2.7 million hectares of indigenous habitat on farms. This leads me to question why we even need a National Biodiversity Policy. This is particularly so when I consider the following points:

1. The Raukumara Forest Park is so over run with deer that the understorey is stripped of regeneration.
2. A farmer I know who bounds one of the native State forests has so many deer emerging onto his farm from the forest that he is prepared to foot the expense of deer fencing his forest boundary.
3. The Whinray Scenic Reserve at Motu is home to kiwi. It is now administered by a private trust that controls pests such as rats, stoats, ferrets, cats and possums in the reserve and surrounding farm land. Native bird life has shown an increase with their efforts.
4. It was announced several years ago that New Zealand would be free of possums and predators of our wildlife by 2050. What has been done towards this target by the government?
5. Our farm is home to the endangered North Island weka. We are aware that they have a high requirement for water so in the dry periods of summer when water is scarce around our house we put dishes of water out for them. We also do not begrudge them helping themselves to the meal we put out for our calves. We have eight or nine at the feeding dishes every day.
6. We have poisoned, trapped and shot possums on our farm. I would suggest we may well have killed more possums per hectare on our farm than has been achieved on the Conservation controlled land holdings.
7. I have also planted native trees and would love to plant more. But I am spending too much time hacking my way through the jungle of red tape and it has sapped my energy and more importantly my enthusiasm.
8. The Government has passed legislation that will have a negative impact on biodiversity. Its virtue signalling Zero Carbon Act relies almost exclusively on planting hundreds of thousands of hectares of pine forest to meet its targets. Pine forests have a far greater fire risk than native forests and burn more intensively than dry grass land so when the next big fire comes, like the one near Nelson last year, the impact on biodiversity in that blaze will be catastrophic.

In the light of these points I find it highly offensive to have the Government proposing regulations for private land owners when it so blatantly failed in its own domain. I see it as purely regulation for regulation's sake, much as all previous proposed and enacted/regulated environmental policy. I see no

evidence of sound science to back this policy. Indeed, the above points show there is strong evidence to show the proposed policy will have a negative effect.

This Government has long ago exhausted any goodwill I may have had towards it by its lack of real engagement with its rural communities. It doesn't even listen carefully to our farming organisations, but I would point out that those organisations often do not represent their members accurately and you should not be giving their submission any more weight than the heart cries from real farmers like me.

Prime Minister Ardern regularly talks about 'well-being'. It would be really great to actually see that in action. The best outcome for biodiversity in New Zealand would come from letting farmers keep on doing what they have been doing for years and for the state to up their game on the conservation land to match these private achievements. We do not need yet another big stick. If this draft Biodiversity Policy comes to fruition in anything close to its current form it will simply be further proof that this government is following an ulterior motive, a motive that has no place in a supposedly free and democratic country.