

Submission on Draft National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.

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Background of our farming family and farm: My family farmed our original property in Western Southland for 110 years before I bought and moved to this property, [REDACTED] 26 years ago. We have a very long and close connection to our land and passion for farming.

I broadly support Federated Farmers position on this draft national policy statement for Indigenous Biodiversity.

After completing Tenure Review about ten years ago, I would hope that all significant Indigenous Biodiversity has been identified and put in DOC estate. In saying that, an extreme view could be that all our native and semi native country could have some biodiversity values.

My overarching view on this IB proposal is that there will be hundreds of millions of dollars spent on assessing and administration of this regulation by both Regional and District councils before even one single native plant or animal is protected. With 30% of the New Zealand land mass in the Conservation Estate, 2.7 million ha's of native bush on private land of sheep and beef farmers plus a further 1.2 million ha's of Crown Pastoral lease land, we have ample land to secure most of our Indigenous Biodiversity.

It is absolute nonsense to spend that amount of funding on trying to protect further areas of IB when the real need is properly protecting what we already have!!!

Weeds and Pests are by far the biggest problem we face as a nation trying to protect and enhance our native species and public data shows that native vegetation cover over NZ has barely changed over the past 20 years. There are only about 5% of native plants and animals that are critically endangered and targeted protection in the form of pest control is the only way of ensuring their long term survival.

Wilding Pines and Firs are one of our most serious pest plants, left unchecked for 30 years, have the ability to completely destroy our native ecosystems over millions of ha's of not

only open tussock grasslands, but also firs will invade and outcompete native Beech Forests. Major investment needs to be made immediately to eradicate these trees or they will become one of the main drivers of change and destroy huge swathes of native biodiversity.

Of animal pests, one only needs to recognise what rabbits have destroyed and changed over the past 150 years. Vast areas have been completely denuded especially tussock grasslands as rabbit plagues will eat the roots out of the ground of any plant. Sheep and fires may have been a small part of reducing ground cover over the years, but livestock will die of starvation long before a rabbit ever would.

Possums, Deer, mustelids and rodents are the other extremely serious pests that have and are continuing to wreck havoc on our native animals and plants. Unless all the tools are evaluated and used, including gene editing, our biodiversity will continue to decline. Wallabies are another serious threat and are starting to become more widespread throughout the south island, with the potential to inflict huge harm on not only pastoral farming but all native plants.

Until a comprehensive Weed and Pest plan can be implemented and Funded, I can't see any merit in potentially locking up more land when as a nation we can't adequately protect what we already have. There are far too many people that think they know about preserving native biodiversity but have no real knowledge on the ground of how a working ecosystem operates. At least farmers are pragmatic and see the basics of the practicalities of weed and pest control and should have much more say in areas of IB.

In summary, I think there may be occasional isolated pockets of high value IB not represented elsewhere that should be protected, but funding the removal of weeds and pests on the ground is by far the highest priority in my opinion. The war on the decline of native species will not be won by filling the pockets of ecologists and administrators looking for more examples to protect.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on this proposal and I am more than willing to answer any further questions that anyone may have.

Yours Faithfully



!4th March 2020