

Submission on proposed Nation Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiveristy

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Date: 14 March 2020

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We support the overall intent of the proposal to maintain or improve New Zealand's indigenous biodiversity.

However, we do not feel the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB) as it is currently drafted is likely to achieve the goals. It looks to be setting the bar so low for classification that far too much will be caught in the net resulting in restrictions in farming operations that will make landowners resentful and not likely to embrace the ethos required to achieve progress.

[REDACTED] is typical of much of East Coast hill country in that it underwent extensive development from the 1950s and accelerated under the Land Development Encouragement Loans in the late 1970s and early 1980's. In that time its land area did not increase (approximately [REDACTED] hectares) but the clearance of gorse and scrub and conversion to pasture increased the carrying capacity fourfold. Subsequent to that land in pasture has remained open although more recently less productive pasture land has been planted for production forestry, there is an extensive poplar and willow pole planting program to reduce erosion and some areas of remaining scrub have been fenced out.

There is no question that extensive areas of New Zealand have been cleared in the past as exemplified by [REDACTED]. However, the NPS-IB seems to be looking back at that phase of NZ history and projecting that it is still occurring at that pace. We do not see that happening in our region.

We keenly feel the effects of changes in government policy. In 2008, when the ETS had been mooted, we bought a neighboring property. It had not had a strong management history and there were large areas of reverting country (approximately [REDACTED] hectares). We had initial advice that this might be appropriate for conversion of commercial forestry and inclusion into the ETS. Within months of purchasing the property rules for the ETS were changed and that area was no longer as readily eligible. We have attempted to make use of the existing vegetation by working with beekeepers producing manuka honey, however due to the

diversity of species in the scrub and nearby clover pastures the quality of the manuka honey has not been high and the changes in honey regulations have reduced the profitability. We have a joint venture with some neighbors for a 2 night, 2 day walk with utilises a dwelling and walks through the scrub, but again that is not particularly profitable. The 10 hectares of pasture is useful for grazing and there is a 1 hectare pine forest, however 55% of the land area is severely restricted as to potential use and would struggle as a stand-alone unit if not part of [REDACTED] (total area approximately [REDACTED] hectares).

Given the low bar the draft NPS-IB is proposing to set for Significant Natural Areas (SNA), we are very concerned that even larger areas of [REDACTED] might be restricted. We have a proven track record of maintaining our indigenous biodiversity alongside grazing management. We are also increasing areas for indigenous biodiversity with both land retirement and tree planting. Having a profitable farm also allows for expenditure on weed and pest control, which is an area that the NPS-IB is sadly lacking in recognition.

We would like to support Federated Farmers' submission.

We would like to speak to our submission if there is the opportunity.