SUBMISSION ON PROPOSED NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY

Ministry for the Environment

P.O Box 10-362

Wellington 6143

SUBMISSION: To OPPOSE the proposed NPS and seek that it be substantially amended in response to concerns expressed below OR withdrawn in its entirety.

INTRODUCTION:

We own a large north facing property in [redacted], Pelorus Sound, Marlborough. Our families have strong generational ties with this area. My husband’s family go back to his great great grandfather. My own family goes back 4 generations to farmers and foresters in this district. The Beal’s have owned [redacted] since the early eighties. It is structured into Trusts and has a strong goal of land retention and continuance. We see ourselves as custodians and guardians.

Once having been cleared of bush (with Govt assistance in the early years) the land was used for pastoral farming – sheep. This lasted until the mid 1980’s when it became uneconomical to continue the open plan type hill farming in this area. By that time we had diversified into marine farming and were able to ‘retire’ the steep and rocky areas and to create smaller paddocks on the flatter land to continue with farming a sustainable number of sheep. Further diversification was made into forestry. The western end of the farm was planted in commercial forest. A plantation of radiata ( [redacted] macrocarpa [redacted], Douglas fir [redacted]), Lusitanis [redacted], Lawson’s cypress [redacted], Larch [redacted] & many interspersed alternative species. We have also planted and continue to plant many natives which we propagate in our own nursery.

We oppose the Proposed NPS on Indigenous Biodiversity in its current form.

We are extremely concerned the broad reaching proposals in the document could prohibit our operations far beyond the probable intent of the statement and could thus disenfranchise us from our land.

Support for indigenous biodiversity
We are extremely supportive and conscious of indigenous biodiversity. We have chosen to exclude stock and manage pests (to the best of our ability) from a large part of the property. We work with DOC, who we have a good relationship with, and have regular private hunters on board. Our kaupapa is to enhance and support systems. We have recently addressed the spread of wilding pines, in conjunction with the Marlborough Sounds Restoration Trust. Ongoing weed control is undertaken.

Our property was assessed by [redacted] June 2006. Four (4) significant sites were identified. Of these, the two sites within the commercial forestry plantations were identified by us at the time of planting (1999) and set aside.

CONCERNS:

This is how we wish to operate on our own land – by continuing to identify significant areas, pests and hazards and to deal with them as we see fit under our stewardship. Under the proposed NPS it appears our stewardship could become over ridden, thus we lose choices and control and become estranged from our whenua. It is imperative we retain this guardianship and that we are empowered to be able to make decisions that move with the times and challenges of natural events and anything the future may present.

COSTS:

We are mindful there are likely to be costs involved in the implication of this proposal, be they direct or indirect, and this is of concern.

CONCLUSION:

The kaupapa and structures we have in place for this property are extremely supportive of indigenous biodiversity.

I refer to the Marlborough District Ecological Significant Assessment Report dated 28/6/06.

Ref: [redacted]

Our greatest concern is lack of control over the property we are most intimate with and have spent so many years tending. We are encouraging enormous amounts of regeneration but, with large areas of kanuka and manuka for example, will we be expected to adhere to a set policy that may not be practical or financially viable to adhere to. History tells us policy can be a very negative influence. The tops we are now trying to protect were cleared originally due to a misguided policy. We need to be the kaitiaki. The unknowns of the future (not least climate change) will require proactive reactions. Dealing through a generic overall plan does not give us faith in the future. Potentially, we see this could be a negative. The consequences of a regulated regime may force us to change our current direction. We would rather support non regulatory methods and incentives to achieve these ends.
We seek the Proposed NPS to be substantially modified to address the concerns we have raised, or that it be withdrawn in its entirety.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted]

Ph: [Redacted]