Dear Minister Parker,

I am deeply concerned with the state of fresh water in New Zealand. More than 70 percent of our waterways are too polluted to swim in, and important wetland habitats for our native fish and birds are being destroyed.

I support the intentions of new policies to improve the health of fresh water in Aotearoa, and I would like new standards to be strong and effective. In particular, I’m looking for:

- **Strong rules** – rules and standards should provide for both human and ecological health, and they need to be enforced by the Government. Self-regulation by industry groups has not worked. I don’t support farm plans in place of strong rules.
- **Water quality** – I support the new measurements for improved water quality especially sedimentation, E. coli, and nitrates. I do not support the exclusion of hydro-electricity from requirements to clean up our big rivers.
- **Protection for wetlands** – this should apply to all wetlands of all sizes including on private land. The forestry industry shouldn’t be exempt from these requirements. Since 90 percent of our wetlands have already been destroyed, all remaining wetlands are significant.
- **Exclude farm animals from streams** – even small streams deserve to be protected because all water is connected. This means fencing some streams that are less than a metre wide if they contribute substantial pollution. Stock must be kept from stream edges and five meters is not enough – pollution can flow right into the water. I also want vegetation to be required to keep pollution run-off to a minimum. Some farmers are doing this well, and I want to see national standards enforced for everyone.
- **Put an end to intensive winter grazing** – this practice is terrible for the animals’ wellbeing and for freshwater quality. All the dirt and pollution clogs up nearby rivers and streams making it deadly for fish.
- **Accountability for regional councils** – proposed ‘action plans’ don’t have teeth. Regional councils must be held to account. New rules must ensure councils stick to a plan and make real progress.
- **Safe rivers for our amazing native fish** – many of our native fish swim up and down streams to complete their life cycles. They need clean water and plenty of it. They also need rivers and streams free of barriers. I support proposals to provide safe fish passage where there are new pumps and dams, but we also need to require the identification
and removal of existing barriers in rivers so our fish can find essential food and mates.

I would like to see a future where our local streams and rivers are safe for kids to swim, eels can migrate to their ancestral waters, and our amazing freshwater fish and river birds can return to abundance. I know New Zealand can achieve this future if we have strong rules and work together!