31st October 2019

REF: Action for Healthy Waterways

To Whom It May Concern,

Canoe Slalom BOP is the Regional Sporting Organisation for the Bay of Plenty and are affiliated to Canoe Slalom New Zealand. We are the largest Canoe Slalom Club in New Zealand and provide a pathway for people to participate in the sport from AIMS Games to International Level.

We run daily club training programmes on suburban and rural sections of water across the Bay of Plenty. We also support our club members to also paddle independently. In addition our paddlers train and compete on other rivers around the country throughout the season. While canoe slalom paddlers are in canoes/kayaks, they do immerse themselves in the water when they fall out or eskimo roll. Clearly water quality is a significant concern for us.

We believe that the health of New Zealand Waterways should be a priority for all. As an organization we are extremely pleased to see the government taking a pro-active approach to this topic and support the proposal to improve the health of our waterways and protect human health by:

- Strengthening Te Mana o Te Wai as the framework for freshwater management
- Better providing for ecosystem health (water, fish and plant life)
- Giving better protection to wetlands and estuaries
- Better management of stormwater and wastewater, and protect sources of drinking water
- Controlling high-risk farming activities and limit agricultural intensification
- Improving farm management practices.

We as an outdoor organisation believe that promoting healthy waterways is not just for water sport users such as ourselves but is a sign of our Nation’s commitment to wider environmental sustainability and our responsibility to future generations.

The policies that have been proposed from the Government are wide ranging, but we feel that the areas of key priority to us are:

1. No further loss of streams (Page 45)
2. New bottom line for nutrient pollution (Page 45)
3. Reducing sediment (Page 48)
4. A higher standard for swimming (Page 50)
We believe increasing the water quality of all our rivers should be a key goal for this plan. The health of the waterways is directly linked to the health of our members. Practicing the sport of Canoe Slalom in polluted rivers clearly can have a direct negative impact on paddlers’ health. If the rivers and waterways in the Bay of Plenty and the rest of New Zealand are clean and unpolluted we can attract more members into the sport of Canoe Slalom both at a recreational and performance level hopefully finding the next Olympic Champion and supporting those who are in the sport to stay fit and healthy.

However we do not agree with the following proposed policy:

1. Exceptions for major hydro schemes to support renewable energy targets (Page 34)

Whilst we agree that increasing the use of renewable energy sources should be a key target for the government, we don’t believe that the damming of rivers across New Zealand should be the preferred option. Dams have a large environmental footprint. They are responsible for the loss of many ecological systems and can impact sections of white water up upstream. These sections provide key learning environments for our members.

And we have a proviso on following proposed policy:

2. A higher standard for swimming (Page 50)

Whilst we agree that a higher water quality standard for swimming is required, we do not think that the proposal is wide ranging enough. We believe that it should be a year-round proposal and applicable to all waterways, not just those deemed ‘swimming sites’. Waterways may be used by the general public for recreational purposes irrespective of its status as a ‘swimming site’. But for canoe slalom specifically we may use waterways that do not fall under this criterion, and year-round, not just in summer.

Yours Sincerely,

Anna Swindells
Chairperson Canoe Slalom BOP