SUBMISSION FOR ACTION FOR HEALTHY WATERWAYS

This is a submission prepared for by Personal details removed from the Wareing Group Ltd. My address being Personal details removed.

I live in Personal details removed Mid Canterbury surrounded by lakes, rivers and streams.

I also own and run a business from our head office in Methven.

I oppose all the proposals under this consultation.

I am happy for my name to be published online has having submitted.

Our business in Methven is a large-scale transport and logistics business catering for mainly farmers and primary producers. We employ around 300 staff and operate 260 truck and trailer units from 11 offices and depots located in Methven, Christchurch, Ashburton, Tinwald, Rolleston, Fairlie, Timaru, Waimate, Kurow and Greymouth.

After reading the consultation document and having in-depth discussions with other people we have concluded that the negative effect on our business could be as high as 70% reduction in business.

This equates to the possibility that we may have to make as many as 210 staff redundant and also decrease our fleet by 182 vehicles.

The dramatic decrease in our business would be disastrous to not only us but to our local and the wider community.

As you are aware job opportunities in the rural areas of New Zealand without intensive farming are very few and far between. This policy would create closures of every business sector in our towns and then flow on to our cities.

On average our driver’s wages would be $75000 with some exceeding $100000. An average drivers age is in his 50’s and normally he has one skill set as he has been driving all his/her working life. A large portion of our staff also are lucky enough that their wife is able to work in the community and they will have a joint income of approx. $120000.

Most of our drivers own their own home and most of them have a mortgage in excess of $100000 on a $400000 house. The maths is very simple; no job no ability to repay their mortgage. When that happens the banks will have to foreclose and the staff member will lose their home.

The flow on effect of this happening is devastating. Property values will fall and undesirables will move into the area attracted by the low property value, bringing along the problems associated with low socioeconomic communities including drug abuse, family violence, suicide and all the areas that represented in appalling statistics.
Local retailers such as the butchers and local grocers would lose business and have to close as they would be financially not viable. Local school rolls would fall causing schools to close and causing teaching staff and support staff to lose their jobs.

We would effectively become a ghost town as has happened to many other rural communities in New Zealand over the last few years.

Another negative effect that doesn’t seem to have been taken into consideration is the health and well being of our rural communities. Already we have a higher than average suicide rate in rural areas, as I’m sure you will agree this is at an unacceptable level. The loss of work and the financial pressures and hardship that go along with that will, without doubt, increase that already unstable mental health of our vulnerable community.

This policy and time frame seem to be ill thought out and rushed without much thought for what will happen to rural communities and also urban communities in the future.

In our business, at every level we have seen positive changes in the last few years.

Our fertiliser application team of 27 units have changed their spreading practices to be more environmentally friendly and as compliant as possible. We have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in the latest GPS tracking and proof of placement technology available; also, we use the latest spreading technology for variable rate applications and integrated weighing systems for very precise application.

Wastewater discharge is another area that has had a lot of money spent on it. We now store wastewater caused by washing out various trucks and trailers and then have it taken away to a certified site.

One of the issues I believe that exists is that this proposed policy does not rely on extensive historical data; where by the data is too young and capsulates to small a snapshot of time. The improvements we have been seeing in our area are caused by many industries changing and adapting the way they carry out general day to day business and improvements that they make to their land and business rather than rules and regulations forced upon them.

I would challenge the members of the select committee to come to our community and spend some time with the local residents and consult them on these proposals and let them explain to the committee how these proposals would effect their businesses and their lives.

In summary I strongly oppose all the proposals under the essential freshwater consultation and believe that either status quo or another more balanced approach is appropriate.