

Proposed amendments to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011



Copy of your submission

Personal details

If you are making this submission as a representative for an organisation, the name of that organisation will be used in any reports on the submissions, but your name will be withheld. If you are making this submission as an individual, your name will be used in any reports on the submissions unless you request otherwise.

First name David

Surname Sherman

Email [withheld]

Organisation

Telephone [withheld]

Address [withheld]

I give permission to publish my details Yes

Why do we need to amend the NPS-FM?

1. Have we correctly identified the problems currently associated with implementing the NPS-FM?
2. If not, what problems, if any, you have faced with implementation?

Options for providing further national direction

3. Do you agree that amending the NPS-FM would solve the problems identified in section 2?

Comment

4. If not, would additional guidance be sufficient to solve the problems identified?

Comment

5. Is there another solution to the problems? Why would that be preferable?

Comment

Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: accounting

6. Do you agree with requiring councils to account for all water takes? Yes

Comment

Yes, but present metering systems and reporting equipment are too expensive for many farmers to afford. Perhaps a bulk discount can be negotiated with suppliers, and the savings passed on to the farmers.

7. Do you agree with requiring councils to account for all sources of contaminants? Yes

Proposed amendments to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011



Copy of your submission

Comment

8. Do you think that the requirements in policies CC1 and CC2 of the proposed NPS-FM amendments have the right balance between national prescription and regional flexibility?

Comment

9. Do you think the time period allowed for councils to develop accounting systems is appropriate?

Comment

Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: NOF values

10. Should there be a national set of values as outlined in appendix 1 of the proposed NPS FM? Yes

Comment

11. Are there any additional values that should be included? Why are these values nationally significant/important (recognising that councils can use other values if they wish)? Yes

Comment

Freshwaters suitable for swimming and other immersion activities should be included as a compulsory national value.

12. Are there any values that should be deleted from appendix 1 of the proposed NPS-FM and why? No

Comment

13. Do you agree with the descriptions of the national values in appendix 1 of the proposed NPS FM? No

Comment

In the section called Human Health (Secondary contact recreation), a "moderate" risk of infection is not defined. In appendix 2, risk of E-coli infection is ranked as <0.1%, 1%, or 5%. These levels might be thought of as MINIMAL, MODERATE, and SUBSTANTIAL, respectively. If this is intended, then a "moderate" or 1% infection rate is too high, as this would result in hundreds of E-coli infections per day. This should be revised to a "minimal risk", or <0.1%.

Likewise, in the last sentence, a percentage of freshwater management units that is safe for recreation should be defined. "In some freshwater management units" has no meaning beyond specifying that "at least one" freshwater body should be safe for recreation. I would say that in "most" freshwater management units, the threat of infection should be no more than would exist naturally. By changing "some" to "most", you change "at least one" to "at least 50%". Even better would be an explicit number or percentage.

In Mahinga Kai / Fishing, the sentence "In some areas, fish abundance and diversity in species and size of fish" needs to be explicit. To what areas does this apply? How many areas should be safe for mahinga kai? Again, "some" implies "at least one", which is insufficient to protect this amenity value.

In Wai Takaro / Contact Recreation, each sentence is crafted in such a way to make recreation dependent on sufficient water quality, rather than mandating that the water quality be managed in such a way as to enable contact recreation. In other words, if the water happens to be clean enough, you can swim there. This does nothing to protect this amenity value.

Proposed amendments to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011



Copy of your submission

Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: NOF attributes

14. Do you agree with the attributes associated with the values in appendix 2 of the proposed NPS FM? No

Comment

There are many important attributes that need to be measured. The Macro-invertebrate Community Index which is a well-used and understood measure of river and stream health to monitor changes in the number and diversity of aquatic insects such as mayflies and caddisflies.

There should also be a limit on deposited sediment. Soil belongs on the land not in rivers. Sediment smothers spawning areas and habitats.

The dissolved oxygen attribute does not specify how often or where it is measured. DO is extremely variable, and minimum levels can only be guaranteed if it is measured several times per hour, in a representative location. There must be guidelines for appropriate locations to install the DO instruments in relation to the point source.

15. Do you agree with the numeric attribute states in appendix 2 of the proposed NPS FM? No

Comment

The proposed bottom line for nitrate toxicity will poison fish and other aquatic life. A 20% extinction rate is unacceptable by most standards. Even the 'A' level is worse than present standards, and the proposed "national bottom line" is equivalent to the most polluted river in the OECD.

16. Do you agree with the narrative attribute states in appendix 2 of the proposed NPS FM? No

Comment

No. The proposed bottom line for total nitrogen and phosphorous will result in nuisance algal blooms.

Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: Timing of putting NOF in place

17. Do you agree with putting a NOF in the NPS-FM now, including only the attributes for which there is adequate evidence, and updating it as the scientific basis for further attributes and states become available?

Comment

18. Or should the Government delay putting the NOF into place until a more comprehensive set of attributes has been developed?

Comment

Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: Processes for freshwater objective setting

19. Do you agree with having the process requirements to link values and freshwater objectives directed in policy CA1 in the proposed amendments? If not, why not?

Comment

20. Do you think the process outlined will work? If not, why not?

Proposed amendments to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011



Copy of your submission

Comment

21. Do you agree with the proposed matters in policy CA1(e) that must be considered when establishing freshwater objectives? If not, why not?

Comment

22. Is it clear that setting freshwater objectives is an iterative process which involves consideration of the impacts of the limits, management methods, and timeframes required to meet a potential freshwater objective?

Comment

23. Do you agree that regions should have discretion to determine timeframes for meeting freshwater objectives?

Comment

24. Are there any aspects of the process that are not clear?

Comment

Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: Compulsory values

25. Do you agree that ecosystem health should be a compulsory value?

Comment

26. Do you agree that human health for secondary contact recreation (such as boating and wading) should be a compulsory value?

Comment

27. Do you think there should be more compulsory values? If so, what should they be, and why? What attributes should be associated with them? Yes

Comment

Swimmable water must be a compulsory national value. In addition to the attributes already mentioned, water clarity and periphyton cover should be associated with human health during recreational contact.

Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: National bottom line

28. Should there be numeric bottom lines for attributes of the compulsory values? Yes

Comment

29. Do you agree with the proposed level at which bottom lines would be set for each attribute of ecosystem health? If not, at what level should they be set? No

Comment

I believe the bottom lines are too lenient. Again, a 10-20% extinction rate is too high. If you are going to allow exceptions anyway, then the bottom lines should be more ambitious. If short-term economic factors require these levels be breached, then exceptions can be made. The overall targets should be higher.

Proposed amendments to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011



Copy of your submission

30. Do you agree with the proposed level at which bottom lines would be set for each attribute of human health for secondary contact recreation? If not, at what level should they be set? No

Comment

A 5% infection rate for exposure to E-coli during secondary contact recreation would result in hundreds of E-coli infections per day. That's ridiculously high. Again, these limits are much too lenient. Assume that 10,000 people are fishing on any given day. If 0.1% contract E-coli, it would be 10 infections. Is that allowable? Even if only 10% of the freshwater units are as bad as the bottom line, then the resulting E-coli infection rate of 1 person per day, 7 per week, 365 per year will become internationally newsworthy.

31. Do you agree that transitional arrangements should be provided to allow councils and communities to set objectives below a national bottom line for a short time? Yes

Comment On the condition that the bottom lines are revised to be more stringent.

Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: Exceptions to bottom lines

32. Do you agree that there could be exceptions where the natural state of the freshwater management unit breaches bottom lines? Where in your region do you think this type of exception might apply?

Comment

Where in your region do you think this type of exception might apply?

Comment

34. Do you agree that there could be exceptions for significant existing infrastructure (eg, dams), where a choice is made to manage a freshwater management unit below bottom lines? Where in your region do you think this type of exception might apply?

Comment

35. Do you agree that freshwater management units eligible under the first two exceptions above should be decided by regional councils?

Comment

36. Do you agree that freshwater management units eligible for an exception due to the effects of significant existing infrastructure should be decided at a national level and included in appendix 3 of the NPS-FM?

Comment

37. What should the criteria be for allowing exceptions based on significant existing infrastructure?

Comment

Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: T?ngata whenua values

38. Do you think the proposed NPS-FM adequately provides for Te Mana o te Wai?

Comment

Proposed amendments to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011



Copy of your submission

39. Do you agree with the way t?ngata whenua values are described in proposed appendix 1 of the NPS-FM?

Comment

40. Do you support adding Te Mana o te Wai to objective A1 of the amended NPS FM as a matter that must be safeguarded? What would be the implications of adding this to objective A1 in the NPS-FM?

Comment

Proposed amendments to the NPS-FM: Monitoring

41. Do you agree with the new section in the NPS-FM requiring monitoring plans? If not, why not?

Comment

Other comments

42. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the issues and proposals in this document?

This document seems to be a very good idea in principle, but it appears to have been distorted by industrial and agricultural interests. If there is to be a reasonable semblance of ecological and economic balance, we must abandon any talk of 10% or 20% extinction rates in a given watershed. Throughout our recent economic boom with tourism and "clean green marketing", the New Zealand economy has relied on our persistent care for our unique ecology. Compromising this ecology to suit the export market will not help us in the long term, and it has the potential to ruin our quality of life for generations to come.