

**Submission to Ministry for the Environment on the
National Policy for Fresh Water Management 2011 amendments**

**from the Environment Justice and Peace Network
St John's Cathedral Napier**

In this submission we focus solely on the national bottom lines.

The document states that these are needed to provide a degree of protection for values widely held across New Zealand, and to protect human health and ecosystem health. We agree, especially given the way the sharp decline in water quality has been allowed to occur across the last generation.

To help achieve this, a bottom line is suggested in section 4.3 of a requirement to safeguard human health for secondary contact recreation such as boating and wading as a compulsory value throughout New Zealand in section CA.

This is NOT an adequate protection for human health, or for the well-being of our rivers and environment.

Basically it implies that as long as boats will float on our rivers and you can walk through the waters in protective clothing without becoming ill as a consequence, that is satisfactory. It is not.

Rather it is an insult to what our environment should be.

Our basic compulsory standard of water for all New Zealand rivers has to be higher than this. At the least they must be safely swimmable, except when naturally occurring events (such as native birds nesting, or drought) might endanger health. . That is what we believe the great majority of New Zealanders consider to be the minimum that is acceptable, and we concur.

We ask you therefore, please, to change the Compulsory Values to make sure they ensure “swimmable” as the basic compulsory minimum standard for New Zealand rivers.

2 February 2014

[withheld]