

**From:** [ withheld ]  
**To:** [WaterReformPublicConsultation](#)  
**Subject:** Rivers are for swimming  
**Date:** Saturday, 25 January 2014 8:41:39 a.m.

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Sarah Gibbs, [ withheld ]

Dear John,

One reason many NZ rivers are polluted is inefficient use of phosphorus fertilisers. As you know, cheap phosphorus is running out. As a country whose farming systems rely heavily on this element to generate foreign exchange, it would seem prudent to work out how to use it more efficiently sooner, rather than later. Water pollution limits will help initiate this transition to more modern farming practices.

I want strong rules that protect our rivers and ensure that they are safe for swimming. The proposed changes are inadequate. Ensuring rivers are clean enough to swim in should be a compulsory standard, not optional.

Too many recognised water quality indicators are missing. If councils don't have to monitor these indicators then we don't get an accurate understanding of the state of our waterways.

The rules should ensure:

- \* water clarity and periphyton cover (a measure of how much algae, bacteria and detritus is covering the river bed) are monitored, to ensure our rivers are safe for swimming;
- \* monitoring of aquatic insects to ensure our rivers are healthy;
- \* there is a limit on both problem pollutants nitrogen and phosphorus so they don't cause nuisance algal growth; and
- \* a limit on sediment to ensure our rivers are healthy.

Any exemptions to the rules should be limited to a list of specific water bodies.

One certain way to help protect our rivers is to ensure that we look after them and that the water is clean enough for swimming, not just wading or boating. Human health and our economy depend on safeguarding our environment.

Sarah Gibbs