

Wendy Gray [withheld]

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.

There should also be criminal sanctions on polluters. Only 1% of the world's water is suitable for drinking. Any person or corporation, particularly, farming, mining (of any sort) and fracking, which pollutes water (and particularly ground water) should pay a higher tax, be subject to very large fines and criminal sanctions for causing the pollution and be required to pay to clean it up. It is quite wrong that the tax payer should have to pay for clean up after pollution.

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.

Clean water is one of the most important resources on the planet. The Austrians pride themselves in having rivers and lakes that have drinking water quality water in them. They are more intensively farmed and occupied than New Zealand but they have had successive governments which value clean water and the people understand how important clean water is. It is part of their national pride that their water is the best in Europe.

I want the Government of New Zealand to reflect the views of New Zealanders regarding our water. We too want to take pride in our clean rivers and lakes. Unfortunately we have had successive governments who did not care and did not reflect what New Zealanders want. Time to change all that bring in TOUGH regulations with CRIMINAL sanctions for the polluters. Make it clear that the POLLUTER will have to pay and it will be very costly.

Wendy Gray