

Your submission to Clean Water

John McArthur

Clause

What are your thoughts on the proposed swimming targets, for example, on the timeframes and categories?

Notes

1. I note that the definition of the rivers and lakes to which these targets apply means that only large rivers (> 4th order) and lakes with circumference greater than 1500m will be included. This is totally inadequate with respect to the values of New Zealanders, where the ability to swim in small rural rivers and 'water holes' is of paramount importance to local communities, as well as to city dwellers wanting to take the family camping and swimming. I urge the government to extend the scope of the application of these targets to all rivers lakes. I recognize this may impact local councils' ability to manage waste water processing and recommend that some of the funds allocated to increasing irrigation (worsening water quality problem) be allocated to local government water quality improvement. 2. I note the Minister has recently changed the threshold for the E Coli / 100ml from 260 to 540. This effectively means that people swimming in waterways at the limit, have had their likelihood of becoming ill raised from 1 in 100 to 1 in 20. This has the effect of making it likely that when a family goes swimming in their local water hole, one of them will go home ill. It beggars belief that the Minister can look at a popular public swimming spot, such as Jones Landing at Arapuni, count heads and come to the conclusion that a dozen or so people are going home sick from what the minister calls a swimmable river. I urge the government to return to the safer limit of 260 E Coli / 100ml. 3. The Clean Water Package refers to "swimmability" throughout, yet many reasons to be in contact with the waterways exist, such as cultural practices. It would be more inclusive and clear if a more general phrase was used, such as 'primary contact'.

Clause

What do you think about the proposed amendments to the Freshwater NPS?

Notes

I copy my submissions from the previous question as these statements apply at times to the NPS. 1. I note that the definition of the rivers and lakes to which these targets apply means that only large rivers (> 4th order) and lakes with circumference greater than 1500m will be included. This is totally inadequate with respect to the values of New Zealanders where the ability to swim in small rural rivers and 'water holes' is of paramount importance to local communities, as well as to city dwellers wanting to take the family camping and swimming. I urge the government to extend the scope of the application of these targets to all rivers lakes. I recognize this may impact local councils' ability to manage waste water processing and recommend that some of the funds allocated to increasing irrigation (worsening water quality problem) be allocated to local government water quality improvement. 2. I note the Minister has recently changed the threshold for the E Coli / 100ml from 260 to 540. This effectively means that people swimming in waterways at the limit, have had their likelihood of becoming ill raised from 1 in 100 to 1 in 20. This has the effect of making it likely that when a family goes swimming in their local water hole, one of them will go home ill. It beggars belief that the Minister can look at a popular public swimming spot, such as Jones Landing at Arapuni, count heads and come to the conclusion that a dozen or so people are going home sick from what the minister calls a swimmable river. I urge the government to return to the safer limit of 260 E Coli / 100ml. 3. The Clean Water Package refers to "swimmability" throughout, yet many reasons to be in contact with the waterways exist, such as cultural practices. It would be more inclusive and clear if a more general phrase was used, such as 'primary contact'.

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What are your thoughts on the proposed stock exclusion regulation, for example, the timeframes and stock types to be excluded?

Notes

I recognize the commercial aspects of bringing about the changes - the financial implications to farmers. 1. However, I do not understand why the proposed changes for dairy herds are separated between those cattle currently milked, and the support cattle. I submit that this separation may lead to unintended consequences and submit that the time frame for milking cattle should also be applied to the support cattle. 2. I understand that much of the environmental damage of stock is caused in the small (narrower than 1m) waterways and that this is exacerbated by poor grazing practice such as break feeding. The time limit for excluding support cattle, break-feeding deer and beef cattle of 2022 appears generous given the environmental damage caused and the ease with which break-feeding management can be altered (generally done with flexible hot-wire fences). I submit this date should be reduced to 2020.

Clause

Do you have any other comments on the contents of the Clean Water discussion document?

Notes

Water quality has suffered significantly over the past decade or two as has been reported in many scientific reports recently. This is of particular importance, in terms of the national values we New Zealanders hold, in the recreational and cultural immersion in our natural waters - the "swimmability". The current government appears fixated on only one 'value', the monetary value of the government books, and our natural values have been seriously neglected as a result. The government has allocated \$100m to a freshwater improvement fund, but this is over a 10 year span and given the amount of work local government will need to do to rectify a decade or more of neglect, this is woefully inadequate. This is also working counter, in many respects, to the government's irrigation fund which is likely to intensify farming practice and consequent damage to freshwater bodies. I submit that the Freshwater

Improvement Fund should be substantially increased - possibly from the Irrigation fund. I believe that the young New Zealanders returning from their OE are doing so for the natural values the New Zealand has, not the monetary value our government is fixated on. It is your empowered responsibility to protect those values, and in this case, recover natural values in our water bodies that have been seriously damaged through neglect.