

Your submission to Clean Water

Rawinia

New Zealand

Clause

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

Notes

Shifting the goalposts is not going to improve freshwater quality in New Zealand, and instead it sends the message to polluters that it's business as usual. We need a much stricter and shorter time frame for swimmable rivers in New Zealand, with new powers included in the RMA which gives regional councils more power to act on freshwater pollution. This includes the ability to stop all further land conversions, irrigation consents, freshwater consents and also the ability to revoke consents at will upstream of waterways which are now too polluted as a result of excessive nitrate run off. Our economy relies on clean, swimmable waterways not only because our tourism industry relies on a clean, green image, but also because New Zealanders rely on clean freshwater for our livelihoods. Currently our waterways are being exploited by greed, demand for every increasing profits and regional councils/local government which aren't acting in the best interests of our environment.

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

Notes

Adding in caveats to the NPS which protect economic wellbeing over environmental protection is ludicrous. The reason we have such poor water quality in NZ is because economic activity has been valued more important than the environment for decades, and with so much abuse comes a clean up bill currently addressed to rate and taxpayers, rather than those in the industry who are polluting. The NPS needs to have much stricter protections of our waterways, void of caveats which allow farmers to get out of following the NPS or RMA because it will be at their economic detriment. The economic element needs to be removed completely so local councils can focus solely on protecting the environment.

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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

All waterways should legally have to be fenced off by 2020, no later. That gives farmers three years to install fences which should have been installed decades ago. The quickest way to reduce water pollution besides reducing stock numbers on farms is to keep stock out of waterways. This issue requires the highest of priorities and current timeframes are too far in the future to affect the crisis we are facing today.

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

Notes

We cannot continue to place economic growth as more important than a finite resource. Freshwater quality in New Zealand is continuing to decline due to lack of action from both local and central governments, and we need much stricter protections. Yes, that will come at some short term economic cost, but we need to be focusing on the long term productivity of one our most precious assets. New Zealand needs less irrigation, less stock and less nitrates to improve our freshwater, and the NPS and RMA need to reflect that to achieve cleaner water we need tougher protections. Currently the NPS is too weak and doesn't go far enough to achieve real change. Sort out your priorities you are the Ministry FOR the ENVIRONMENT FFS