

Subject: Clean rivers and lakes in New Zealand SUBMISSION

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Submission by Geoff Spearpoint on the proposed amendments to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.

28th April 2017

Geoff Spearpoint,
[REDACTED]

I just want to make a general submission in favour of any regulations and other action that removes stock (particularly cows and cattle) from all waterways, encourages replanting of stream banks, and reduces use of fertilisers on farm land, with their attendant runoff into waterways and seepage into the groundwater watertables. What has been common practice in NZ was never acceptable to me, and I applaud any actions to reduce E coli counts and nitrogen, phosphorus and other nutrients added to the land.

As a New Zealander who enjoys the outdoors, there is significant loss to me in not being able to swim in rivers. The benefits of farming are primarily to the farmer, yet the practices that leave water and the water table below degraded affect all the community downstream, who have been, until recently, largely powerless to stop it. This is totally unacceptable, and has been very frustrating to many.

There is another issue of equal importance, and that is the strain past and current farming practices put on indigenous species, fish, plants, and other life. Some areas are so trashed it is a wonder anything still lives and I see it as a dereliction of Governmental responsibility that has allowed the situation to deteriorate to the level it has. This means that environmentally sustainable flows are essential in all rivers and streams.

Much has been achieved by good farmers to clean up the environment. But there is much much more to do, and where positive action isn't taking place, there need to be tough, nationally enforced standards to make it to happen. If I disobey the road rules I am not generally given second chances, let alone third, and fourth chances. Neither should business, and in most spheres they aren't. Why is farming treated in such a soft and weak way? Regional Councils need far more backbone and support for enforcing standards, and that needs to be driven by Government nationally. Period.

Coupled with this, Government money (i.e., taxpayer's) should not be used to support irrigation that benefits primarily a few individuals. Especially when the results are intensification and more pollution.

Lets think of the whole community before allowing more intensification and not allow any more of it until the farm outflows are better than the water coming in. Then we really would be getting somewhere.

So, to overview my comments, no more intensification, start enforcing rules, and have legislation that enforces standards that make ALL rivers swimmable, and a government that has the guts to enforce it.

Thankyou for your time.
Geoff Spearpoint