

Submission Form

Submission on a publically notified proposed Regional Plan prepared under the Resource Management Act 1991.

On: The Waikato Regional Councils proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 - Waikato and Waipa River Catchments

To: Waikato Regional Council
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I am not a trade competitor for the purposes of the submission but the proposed plan has a direct impact on my ability to farm. If changes sought in the plan are adopted they may impact on others but I am not in direct trade competition with them.

I wish to be heard in support of this submission.

If others make similar submissions, I would consider presenting a joint case with them at the hearing.

Kelly Roberts

7/03/2017

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Signature

date

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Waikato Regional Councils proposed Plan Change 1.

My name is Kelly Roberts and I am a medical student, currently placed at Christchurch Hospital. My parents are sheep and beef farmers in the Maramarua area and have been farming this land since 1994.

Currently the farm carries 10 stock/ha with a 3:1 beef to sheep ratio. The aspirations for the land have always been to increase its productivity through utilising nutrient equilibrium and sustainability under the guidance of Neal Kinsey (agronomist).

During my summer holidays I attended a submissions workshop held by Beef and Lamb NZ. It was here that I became aware of plan to clean up the Waikato River. Whilst I agree entirely with Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River/Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato, I believe that the Proposed Plan Change 1 is neither a fair nor realistic solution.

My particular concern is the financial implications that this plan has on the farmers and the following psychological and social effects this plan will have.

The specific provisions:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
	SUPPORT / OPPOSE	REASON	RELIEF SOUGHT
<i>Objective 1</i>	I Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reasons I support this are • This is a common goal for both farmers and the council • It is important for all parties to be aware of water quality, and to be proactive in its restoration 	
<i>Objective 2</i>	I oppose	<p>This objective, whilst its intentions honourable, is frankly unrealistic given the stringent rules placed. The reasons for this are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This plan, places an estimated \$250,000 cost on my fathers farm through land devaluation, inability to increase productivity, waterway fencing and unstockable land • This kind of financial implication for each farm alone places huge burden on the farmer • We know that farming is an isolated occupation, with an inproportionate amount of mental health disease. We know that a low dairy payout caused a significant increase in mental health disease among the farming community. Therefore the huge financial burden placed by PC1 will adversley affect farmers mental wellbeing 	<p>Whilst this objective is correct in intent, if it is to met then serious changes need to be made to the proposed change.</p> <p>A financial subsidy to farmers to pay for the costs of implementing this change should be considered.</p>

The specific provisions:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waikato Regional Council have stated that they currently have no means of robustly measuring social, economic or cultural wellbeing • If this proposed change makes beef and sheep farming uneconomic, where will this leave farmers? Without jobs to support their families, potentially requiring the benefit at cost to the government • By financially stunting farmers, this in turn will financially stunt small towns. Small towns rely on farmers income to support their businesses. • Small schools in rural areas will also suffer through the financial stunting of farmers and businesses who cannot donate nor contribute to local activity such as fundraisers • Additionally unemployment rates will increase with workers laid off and some farms going bankrupt. Unemployment leads to a huge range of social complications such as drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and petty crime. 	
<i>Objective 3</i>	I support	Improvement in water quality for each subcatchment is reasonable.	I would like to see a catchment by catchment monitoring system, so that catchments with large amounts of discharge can be targeted more stringently

The specific provisions:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
			then catchments with appropriate discharge.
<i>Objective 4</i>	I oppose	<p>This objective against whilst being honourable is unfortunately already unable to be met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The beef and sheep community is already unhappy with the WRC due to the inclusion of only one sheep and beef representative in the collaborative stakeholders group • PC1 farmers ability to make decisions regarding their own land such as stocking rates and fertiliser application which undermines their ability to do their job. • Farmers are working towards long term goals in productivity. By removing any potential for change or growth, this removes incentive to work and thereby decreases resilience. • This plan, described as ambitious, does not exemplify a staged approach that allows communities to undertake adaptive management. • The social and economic repercussions of this plan as outlined in objective 2 will destroy community resilience • Use the West Coast of NZ as an example of Primary Industry failing (Gold and Coal mine closure), significantly affecting the social, 	Adopt the subcatchment approach as outlined in objective 3.

The specific provisions:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
		economic and cultural wellbeing of the whole region.	

In conclusion, I am extremely concerned about the psychological, social and financial implications that this plan will have for the rural communities in the Waikato region. There are many examples of small towns affected by the social issues of unemployment such as Reefton on the West Coast and Flaxmere in the Hawkes Bay. This issue could become so much more than a healthy rivers plan, but a regional social and financial crisis. I understand this seems a bit extremist, but as a member of the farming community with experience in the health system, I am confident this will be the outcome.

I would be happy to present this case at a hearing in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Kelly Roberts