

**WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1 -  
WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS**

**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  
401 Grey Street  
Hamilton East  
Private bag 3038  
Waikato Mail Centre  
HAMILTON 3240

**Full Name(s):**

Stephen David Williamson

**Phone (hm):**

07 8255706

**Phone (wk):**

07 8255706

**Postal Address:**

2606 Raglan Road, RD12, Hamilton

**Postcode:**

3293

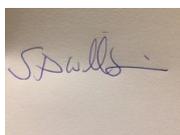
**Email:**

conehillfarm@gmail.com

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.**



**Stephen Williamson**

**6/3/17**

# WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1 - WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS

## Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Waikato Regional Council's proposed Plan Change 1.

My name is Stephen Williamson and I am a sheep and beef farmer in the Waitetuna Valley, in the Raglan District (Waikato West Coast catchment area).

My family has farmed on this rolling to steep hill country (138 hectare) property for 65 years and I have personally farmed it for 40 years.

Over the years it has been a small dairy unit, and a traditional sheep and beef farm. The traditional model was not financially sustainable and so over the years the farming model changed into more of a trading/fattening operation. This has allowed me to be flexible – buying and selling sheep/cattle to make the most of market conditions, weather and pricing. For this reason, my stock numbers vary significantly on any given date.

I feel my family has been very active in conservation:

- We chose not to cut our bush down in the 80s when the Government of the day was paying land clearance incentives to farmers;
- We have invested in fencing along our river; and
- We have extensive tree cover.

We are hopeful that our son will take over the farm in the future however the proposed plan would not make purchasing a hill country farm in the Waikato a viable proposition. If the proposed plan goes ahead, the value of our life time investment will decrease significantly as farm prices are based on production, profitability and future potential.

## WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1 - WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS

The specific provisions of the proposal that this submission relates to and the decisions it seeks from Council are as detailed in the following table. The outcomes sought and the wording used is as a suggestion only, where a suggestion is proposed it is with the intention of 'or words to that effect'. The outcomes sought may require consequential changes to the plan, including Objectives, Policies, or other rules, or restructuring of the Plan, or parts thereof, to give effect to the relief sought.

The specific provisions my submission relates to are:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
	SUPPORT / OPPOSE	REASON	RELIEF SOUGHT
<p><b>The Plan as a Whole</b></p> <p>Uncertainty to farm in the future</p>	<p>Oppose</p>	<p>The proposed plan has not considered the long term consequences for NZ farmers and the NZ economy as a whole.</p> <p>Any plan needs to be fair and equitable – not exclude certain groups – eg Maori and urban residents.</p> <p>It is not acceptable that farmers are expected to bear the burden of cleaning up the Waikato River when there is clear evidence that cities are polluting waterways. Urban pollution is no different.</p>	<p>Delete the proposed plan and replace with a plan which clearly establishes a pathway for farmers to address environmental concerns while future proofing their businesses.</p> <p>Clearly articulate how the end state water quality outcomes will be achieved</p>

**WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1 - WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS**

The specific provisions my submission relates to are:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
<p><b>Nitrogen Reference Point</b></p> <p><i>Objectives 1 and 4 Policies 2 and 7 Rules 3.11.5.2 to 3.11.5.7 Schedule B, and any other related provisions</i></p>	<p>Oppose</p>	<p>The fertiliser applied on our farm varies from year to year based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stocking rates at the time</li> <li>• Soil test results</li> <li>• Financial results and ability to pay</li> </ul> <p>By capping nitrogen limits and not allowing stock policy changes you are limiting our ability to capitalise on opportunities as they appear; eg when Hawkes Bay, Gisborne or Northland farmers encounter drought conditions, stock has to be sold off to other areas in NZ not affected by drought. Under the proposed plan, farmers based in the Waikato would no longer be able to assist due to their set nitrogen and stocking rates.</p> <p>This would be an animal welfare and economic disaster for the drought stricken farmers.</p> <p>There is also the more serious issue that in drought situations, NZ could lose very valuable breeding stock as drought affected stock would need to be slaughtered instead of being grazed or sold on to Waikato farms.</p>	<p>Delete requirements to be held at or below a properties nitrogen reference point, especially for low discharging operations.</p> <p>Delete use of OVERSEER in the regulation.</p> <p>If there needs to be an allocation of nitrogen discharges, then base the allocation on the natural capacity of soils and not on existing land uses.</p>

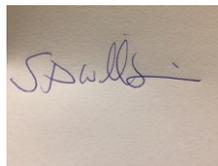
**WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1 - WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS**

The specific provisions my submission relates to are:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
<p><b>Stock Exclusion</b></p> <p>Policy 2 Rules 3.11.5.2 to 3.11.5.7 and Schedule C, and any other related provisions</p>	<p>Oppose</p>	<p>The rule of excluding livestock from drains, lakes and wetlands would bring our hill country farming operation to its knees. We have year round water flowing continuously from springs high up in almost every gully and winding down to form increasingly larger streams until they join the river that winds approximately eight kilometers through the farm as it heads out towards sea.</p> <p>Over the years we have spent considerable effort and money fencing the river however we see the task of fencing off minor tributaries as near impossible as the contour is steep, rocky and not conducive to fences.</p> <p>We also wish to note that since fencing the river, we have noticed there has been a higher incidence of river banks caving in. This appears to be due to the foliage on the sides of the river coming under pressure when the river level rises and flows increase.</p> <p>Apart from the financial burden of fencing down each and every gully, it is hard to imagine who is going to physically do the fencing work; The average age of a sheep and beef farmer is around 56 years old and fencing contractors who are prepared to dig posts in on hill country are in extremely very short supply.</p>	

**WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1 - WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS**

The specific provisions my submission relates to are:	My submission is that:		The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:
		<p>If your suggestion is that these areas could be planted in pines or even left to regenerate, then we would be left with very little to farm with.</p> <p>What is the Council's position on who is responsible for eradicating weeds and looking after areas that are fenced as we believe once vegetation is established it will clog the waterways and cause flooding, possibly washing fertiliser off surrounding paddocks.</p>	
<p><b>Farm Environment Plans</b> Policy 2, Rule 3.11.5.3, 3.11.5.4, Schedule 1</p>	<p>Oppose</p>	<p>While this would be a coup for environmental and farming consultants this appears to be yet compliance cost which farmers would have to pay for.</p>	<p>Delete requirement</p>

Yours sincerely



Stephen Williamson

**WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1 -  
WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS**