

To: Waikato Regional Council
Private Bag 3038
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Hamilton 3240

Submission on: Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1: Waikato and Waipa River Catchments

Date: 8 March 2017

Submission by: Taniwha Estate Ltd – Ian and Pamela Storey

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Background

Taniwha Estate Limited is a dairy farming operation located in Te Hoe in the North Waikato. We have been farming in Te Hoe since 2001, and currently milk 470 cows on a 192HA property, but come from a North Waikato dairying family that have been dairy farming for well over a century. We have invested significant capital over many years to mitigate the environmental impact of our rural business, seeing ourselves as contentious caretakers of the land and animals in our care. We provide employment for 3 individuals, alongside supporting a number of rural suppliers and service providers. We volunteer extensively throughout our community at the local, regional and national level, while raising two children.

1. Whole of Plan

We support the intent of the Plan Change to improve the water quality of the Waikato and Waipa Rivers and the approach taken subject to the submission made below.

We seek that the Plan change is retained subject to submissions made below being adopted or such other relief that will address the issues raised in this submission.

2. Submissions made by DairyNZ and Fonterra

We have seen and support the submissions made by DairyNZ and Fonterra and seek the adoption of those submissions or such other relief that will address the issues raised in those submissions subject to the submission made below.

3. Timeframe

We support the timeframe of 80 years to achieve the vision and strategy of PC1. We do not support that agriculture is the only industry or group that has to implement change in the first 10 years of the plan. All sectors of society have a role to play from day one in achieving the 80-year goal.

4. Levels achievable 365 days/year

We do not support a requirement to achieve water quality targets 365 days per year. This is an unrealistic expectation given the impact of storm events and the ability to control the influence of these events in an economically achievable manner.

5. Low understanding of the impact of PC1 throughout the region

We don't feel that there is sufficient widespread understanding of the implications of PC1 throughout the Waikato Region. Not only are there significant rural occupants and business owners that are uneducated on this plan change, there are equally significant numbers of town and urban-dwellers that are not aware of the social and economic impact PC1 would make on them directly, nor are they aware of their own contribution to water quality issues, specifically through the sewer/waste water infrastructure of the towns/cities they live in, that they will need to address now and into the future to achieve this 80-year goal.

6. Effect on rural communities

Less intensification results in less employment opportunities, impacts on rural schools and service providers. The result of PC1 will see a scaling back of the rural economy, and consequently the urban economy, and the rural farming industry will be less capable of supporting community initiatives therefore community-good services such as libraries, social services, and infrastructure will have to be further supported by the urban rating base.

7. Effect on rating base

As agriculture becomes less intensive, land values will reduce relative to urban land values and urban communities will need to increase their relative rates participation in order to support the equivalent level of services and support.

8. Land use change

The proposed restrictions on land use change will result in lower land capital values in the short term. This impact will be borne by the current land owners and therefore they are the ones that will be contributing the most financially to the achievement of the 80 year targets. The impact on the community at large as well as future generations will be ongoing.

9. Other contributors besides agriculture to water quality issues

Alongside the impact of urban environments, other things such as hydro dams, are contributors to water quality issues. If we are looking to improve water quality, there should be no exemptions. If agriculture, dams, urban environments or other contributors are negatively impacting on water quality, all should be required to make appropriate improvements. We cannot just rely on one sector to bear the cost.

10. Farm Environmental Plans

Is there sufficient consultant capability and capacity to meet the timeframes for farm environmental plans and ensure that substandard plans aren't issued?

11. Over-reliance on rural sector to deliver water quality improvement

Water quality improvement needs to be addressed by all sectors of our society. While city and district councils have current consents in place regarding treatment and disposal of sewage/waste water, that should not preclude them from having to make improvements now. If individual land owners are expected to invest significant capital to improve water quality now and in the next 10 years, so too should the urban environments. We all have a part to play in achieving the Vision and Strategy and it is not for just the rural sector to implement change. Our concern is that agriculture will make significant investment and

financial contribution towards achieving the vision and strategy, and when it comes time for the urban environments to make their financial contribution, the plan will be adjusted minimising their responsibility due to the unpalatability, both economic and political, of the cost that will need to be borne by each individual urban rate payer. An example we have recently seen that has led to our scepticism of the urban dweller's willingness to participate is recent urban resistance to water meters and the role that singular issue played in local elections.

We do wish to speak at the hearing in support of our submission.

Handwritten signatures of Ian Storey and Pamela R. Storey in black ink.

Signed:

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Director
Taniwha Estate Ltd

Pamela Storey
Director
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