



Hugh Logan
Chair, Land and Water Forum
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Dear Hugh

Thank you for the Land and Water Forum's report "Better freshwater management" and your letter of 31 October 2017.

We recognise the Forum's contribution to shifting the public debate on freshwater management from where it was a decade ago, and to policy development. The Forum has brought together key stakeholders seeking to create consensus on difficult and complex issues, and delivered recommendations that have improved the freshwater management system as a result.

The new Government is committed to stopping the state of our waterways getting worse, and improving quality to a swimmable standard.

We have directed the Ministry for the Environment to develop a detailed plan for achieving our goals, with a particular focus on nutrient allocation, sediment, wetlands and estuaries, more water sensitive land use, stronger compliance, monitoring and enforcement, and science that supports good decision making. This will include amendments to the NPS-FM and will also look at its implementation.

Our priority is to avoid further degradation. We invite the Forum to give more detailed consideration of interim limits and measures (paragraphs 129-142 of your report), and provide us with advice on what could be done between now and 2020 to prevent further damage. Or, in your words, what can be done to 'hold the line'.

We are also interested in how to provide stronger national direction around allocation of nutrient and sediment loads by catchment, to facilitate faster implementation at the regional level.

We therefore seek advice from the Forum on whether there is a consensus view on how best to:

- a. allocate nutrient and sediment loads by catchment, in order to achieve fairness between existing capital investment and undeveloped land, while meeting science based bottom lines; and

- b. how to implement this without repetition of the same underlying policy debate in each regional council area.

We welcome your advice on these areas by the end of May 2018. The Ministry for the Environment has been instructed to work with you on using remaining funding to enable this.

We note the Forum believes stakeholder engagement and agreement is an important element in the durability of policy. The Government is committed to transparently engaging with stakeholders and fully understanding and considering views from all sides of an issue. For that reason we urge the Forum to re-engage with those groups that have disengaged. It is our intention to speak directly to the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand (Forest and Bird), Fish and Game New Zealand, Greenpeace and the Environment and Conservation Organisations Aotearoa (ECO) to encourage them to contribute to development of a consensus view within the Forum on these challenging issues.

In addition to seeking the views of the Forum we will also be asking officials to engage others such as the Iwi Advisors Group and the Technical Advisory Group on allocation issues.

We will be giving further consideration next year to how best to draw on the experience and expertise of stakeholders as we make progress on protecting and restoring our freshwater resources while encouraging a more diverse and productive economy.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely



Hon David Parker
Minister for the Environment



Hon Damien O'Connor
Minister of Agriculture