Submission on Proposed Water and Land Plan

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We would like to take the opportunity to be heard in support of this submission and consider presenting in a joint case on similar submissions.

Physiographic zones

Physiographic zones help inform Good Management Practice (GMP) on farm and allow farmers to consider the risk to water quality of within different zones and zone variants. Physiographics do not inform actual water quality in stream and in receiving environments.

Variants within physiographic zones can change immediately if development takes place. E.g. A zone with the variant overland flow can change immediately to artificial drainage if drainage work is undertaken. The process to contest zone boundaries is unclear and the only avenue at this stage is to do this through a consent process. This will be at considerable cost to the farmer, given the complexity of the science, and may also prove difficult.

Applying the physiographics as a regulatory tool without consideration of economic, social and cultural impact has many implications. In particular, land values are immediately impacted by implying some zones are more favourable to others in regards to land use. It is too early to be using the physiographic zones as a regulatory tool.

Considerations:

Oppose the use of Physiographics as a regulatory tool in this plan.

Physiographics used only to inform GMP and no rules to be based on certain physiographic zones.

Physiographic maps sit outside the plan along with the GMPs

Allow for the limit setting process to take into account economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts on an equal basis with physiographics helping to inform this process.

Objectives:

The councils 18 objectives are very heavily weighted in favour of environmental considerations. Objective 9 also elevates environmental considerations above all other considerations.

Considerations:

Provide equal consideration to environmental, social, cultural and economic considerations in the plans objectives.

Support objective 2

Oppose and remove objective 9
Policies:

Oppose Policy 2. Part 2. Some Iwi indicators may not be easily measured or quantified and cannot take precedent over other values.
Reword to “Give consideration of water quality and quantity based on Ngai Tahu indicators of health”

Oppose and remove Policies 4-12 from the plan and place alongside the GMPs outside the plan.

Farming activities have been elevated above other landuses or urban activities. In particular dairy farming has been elevated above all activities.

Policy 16. Oppose and remove as a policy. Also avoid the term strongly discourage in favour for mitigate in other parts of the Plan.

Policy 33. Support but amend: “Prevent the reduction in area, function and quality of significant wetlands, including through drainage and vegetation removal”

Policy 40. Oppose and remove. Consents are granted for specific time to provide certainty for investment. Allowing shorter durations does not provide consideration for investment and adds to the cost of consent if renewal periods are shorter. Consents should also not be aligned with the FMU process. We are yet to know how this will be applied and the timing of community decisions. This all provides uncertainty.

Policy 45. Support. FMU or catchment limit setting decisions should take precedent over any rules in the plan.

Policy 47. Support. The catchment limit setting process should be a full collaborative process. All values should be treated equally as part of this process.

Rules:

All rules relation to physiographic units: Oppose the use of physiographics for specific rules in the plan. Physiographics and maps should sit outside the plan alongside GMPs.

Rule 13: Oppose. Remove the mapping of tile drain requirement (v) as this has no direct on water quality.


The requirement for farm management plans allows farmers to engage in applying GMPs on their specific farm. These plans must be able to be completed by the farmer to get full utilisation. Any unnecessary cost by having to engage consultants to complete a plan will result in a wasted exercise.

All areas must be treated equally. The physiographic zones are best used to inform GMP and best sit outside of the plan.


It is important to define dairy farming in the plan. There are many example in the province were dairy farmers have neighbouring land that can be used for supplement, winter grazing and raising young stock.
Recommend defining dairy farming to “the grazing of land for the purposes of producing milk from lactating animals”

**Rule 22. Oppose**

There are many examples in the province where dairy farmers have neighbouring land that can be used for supplement, winter grazing and raising young stock. The plan needs to allow for the use of this land for dairy farming provided cow numbers do not exceed current discharge consent numbers. This rule should focus on the effects of the increase in cow numbers not the effects of increase in land for dairy farming. In most occasions an increase in land area is a decrease in stocking rate, therefore lessoning effects.

Recommend giving priority to existing consents regardless and allowing for increase in land area if consent number are within compliance.

Recommend that New or Expanded dairying also is a restricted discretionary activity.

**Rule 23. Oppose.**

Oppose the use of physiograhics to determine this rule. All of Southland should be treated the same for these rules. The determination of this rule based on physiograhics has huge environmental and economic implications. If larger graziers choose to reduce grazing area, the winter grazing will be forced into other areas.

Recommend allowing a 50ha threshold across Southland or limited to 20% of landholding.

It is important wintering in Southland is undertaken as per GMP. This is best achieved through Farm Management Plans, informed by the physiograhics outside the Plan.

The 100m setback in the coastal marine area is unnecessary and will pick up wintering that has little to no environmental impact. E.g. Wintering on the South Western coast can take place well within the 100m setback on perfectly formed soils over cliffs or with sand dune buffers. The Plan is also a freshwater plan, so shouldn’t give consideration to marine environments.

Recommend removal of this clause and moved to a GMP consideration.

The setbacks from watercourses are too complicated to apply when working on farm. They also do not allow for normal cultivation if a paddock is undulating. More consideration for simplicity of these rules are required.

Recommend all levels of consent need to be restricted discretionary to give certainty to consent applications.

**Rule 32. Oppose**

 Recommend there needs to be a minimum size requirement for storage facilities as per the previous plan.

Recommend Ancillary structures also need to be removed from the requirement for drop test.

**Rule 35**

The 28 day return period is very restrictive and does not allow for normal farming practice when grazing rotation rounds are close to this period.
Recommend referring back to previous plan guidelines

Rule 40
Recommend that silage be treated as a permitted activity and covered as a GMP.

Rule 41
Recommend this is combined with rule 40.
Recommend no rule be required for discharge of silage leachate and should be covered as a GMP.

Rule 70. Support
Support stock exclusion rules in lowland areas and exclusion of sheep from the rule.
Support stock exclusion on slopes above 16 degrees

Appendix N. Support
Support the requirement for farm management plans. These plans need to be able to be undertaken by the farmer and not consultants. Farm plans should only need updated to a minimum level when changes occur and should be treated as living documents rather than updated yearly. There is concern that setting certain plans in stone doesn’t allow for change throughout the year without consultation.