



ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION ORGANISATIONS OF NZ INC.

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Local Government and Environment Select Committee
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Parliament Buildings
Wellington

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Attention Charlotte Yeabsley

Submissions on the Resource Management (Restricted Duration of Certain Discharge and Coastal Permits) Amendment Bill

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Environment and Conservation Organisations of NZ (ECO) is the national alliance of 55 groups with a concern for the environment. ECO has been involved in issues of resource management and land-use policy since its formation 40 years ago.

This submission has been prepared by members of ECO Executive and is in line with ECO Policy.

ECO wishes to be heard in support of this submission. Please contact the ECO office at eco@eco.org.nz on 04-385-7545.

2 COMMENTS

ECO supports this Bill and welcomes the initiative to fix the anomalous provision that has allowed apparently unrestrained pollution of an important river.

The time frame that the Bill allows to permit polluting discharges in “exceptional circumstances” is in ECO’s view still far too liberal.

Our understanding of the original purpose of the section 107(2) (a) was that it was to permit discharges in the event of some rare and unusual and **temporary** circumstances so that discharges could be made. It was not intended to allow continued long term discharges. We believe that the use of this subsection for long term discharges is an abuse or at least a serious anomaly.

We concur that the situation at the Tarawera River is intolerable, but consider that the “fix” proposed is far too liberal still. One to three months is a much more reasonable time to allow some sudden loss of discharge control to be remedied. In our view, the holder of an exceptional circumstance permit should have every incentive to remedy the situation quickly, and should be reviewed regularly. A three month time period would allow this, with any further period having to be subject to a further consent application – which should not be readily granted.

Recommendation:

To that end, we recommend that the text in clause 5 of the Bill be changed to:

Section 107 amended (Restriction on grant of certain discharge permits)

After section 107(2), insert:

“(2A) Despite section 123, the maximum period for which a discharge permit or a coastal permit may be issued pursuant to subsection (2)(a) is ~~5 years~~ **three months** from the date of commencement of the consent under section 116.”

3 CONCLUSIONS

ECO is grateful for the opportunity to make these submissions and to be heard.

Yours sincerely

Cath Wallace
Co-chair