

Proposed Natural Resources Plan:

Submitter:

Philip and Dorothy Tortell

Submitter Number:

S91

SUBMISSION of PHILIP and DOROTHY TORTELL on the GWRC PROPOSED NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN 2015

Wellington Regional Council

23 SEP 2015

1 Who we are

We are Philip and Dorothy Tortell and we have lived at 52 Ames Street in Paekakariki for the past 20 years. Our telephone number is 04-292 8506 and our email addresses are philip.tortell@outlook.com and dorothyortell@outlook.com.

We came to live in Paekakariki with plans for retiring here and then leaving the property to our children and grandchildren. In other words, this is our home.

According to available records, the property had been subdivided in 1941 and approved by the then Local Authority (Hutt County Council). Since we purchased the property in 1994 we have carried out numerous improvements and renovations including a new timber seawall (in 2008) to replace a damaged and unsightly concrete wall. All works have been carried out with full Council approvals, according to engineering design and by professional tradesmen.

When we bought our property on the beachfront in Ames Street we knew that there were risks – risks from the occasional flood events on the Paekakariki Stream and risks from the wave action and changing climate on the coastal frontage. We acknowledged those risks and set about managing them to the best of our ability, with District Council and GWRC approval.

While our submission stands on its own merit, we also support the submission of Coastal Ratepayers United.

2 Recognition of people and their needs

The Proposed Natural Resources Plan (PNRP) fails to address the needs of residents and ratepayers in coastal areas. We submit that while some of the coast in the Wellington Region is comparatively pristine, a large proportion comprises developed, inhabited residential areas - this is where many people live as a result of planning and development decisions made by current and previous local authorities. We submit that while the PNRP makes mention and provisions for future needs and future generations, it is mostly silent about current existing residents and their needs. While the PNRP has objectives to protect ecological values, water, wetlands, public access, Maori customary rights, infrastructure, energy generation, etc, there is no objective to protect and safeguard the existing rights of those who live on the coast.

The PNRP makes reference to the Resource Management Act (RMA) and the purpose of the RMA is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources (s 5(1)) and Section 5(2) states that sustainable management "*means managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being and for their health and safety,*" (our emphasis). The PNRP makes no explicit attempt to provide for the well-being or safety of people and communities.

There is little or no recognition by the PNRP of the NZ Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS) Objective 6, which requires Local Authorities "*To enable people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and their health and safety, through subdivision, use, and development ...*" and under Policy 6 (f) states "*consider where development that maintains the character of the existing built environment should be encouraged, and where development resulting in a change in character would be acceptable*". The PNRP needs to give effect to the NZCPS by protecting, to the extent possible, the built environment along the coast, thus safeguarding people's

lifetime investments, and outlining proposed actions by GWRC to assist and support ratepayers with managing the natural risks associated with the coastal environment.

3 Risk management

We object to the inconsistency portrayed in the way that the PNRP treats river and stream mouth cutting (Rule 193) on one hand and seawalls (Rule 165) on the other hand. Under Rule 193, cutting of a river mouth is a permitted activity; while Rule 165 considers seawalls to protect existing homes as a controlled activity having stated in Objective O22 that hard engineering mitigation and protection methods are only used as a *last practicable option*. We submit that as both these activities are carried out to manage natural risks, they should both be permitted activities.

According to Section 27 of the NZCPS, section 1 (c), Local Authorities should be "*recognising that hard protection structures may be the only practical means to protect existing infrastructure of national or regional importance, to sustain the potential of built physical resources to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations*". We submit that the PNRP should extend these sentiments to private residential coastal properties which have existed for a number of years and which can meet the foreseeable needs of future generations.

NZCPS Policy 25 (a) directs Local Authorities to "*avoid increasing the risk of social, environmental and economic harm from coastal hazards*". We submit that the difficulties placed in the way of residents who wish to manage their risk through seawalls and other hard structures, contravenes this policy.

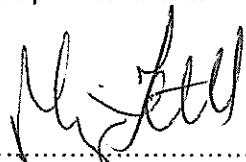
4 Conclusion

In conclusion we wish to reiterate the key and salient remedies that would satisfy our objections:

Recognize, explicitly, that people actually live along the coastal strip, in subdivisions and developments approved by previous Local Authorities, and aim to protect, to the extent possible, the built environment along the coast, thus safeguarding people's lifetime investments, and assisting and supporting affected ratepayers with managing the risk associated with coastal living.

Recognize, that in many places (such as Paekakariki), the natural dune option is not available any more as a result of development decisions made by previous Local Authorities and acknowledge that hard protection structures are the only practical means to protect existing homes and infrastructure.

Make an explicit attempt to provide for the well-being and safety of people and communities who live on the coast and desist from making it harder for residents to protect their homes from existing and predicted risks.


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Philip Tortell

23/09/15
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Date


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Dorothy Tortell

23.9.15
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