

To whom it may concern,

6. 8 . 2019.

My name is Pete Beech, founder and chairman now patron of the Guardians Of The Sounds in Picton for over 20 yrs.

The Guardians spent 5 long years campaigning against the use of Methyl Bromide for fumigating logs in Picton, as a result of the campaigning by us and others the EPA had a reassessment following a hearing here in Picton 2009.

The reassessment acknowledged our concerns and made a ruling that MB fumigations could continue but industry was put on notice and given 10 yrs to develop a recapture programme. Soon after the MDC and Port Marlborough decided to stop the use of MB for fumigation of logs under tarps.

The most telling points was the revelation by a man who was the safety officer for the local port company who lived in Shakespear bay (the log port,) his wife had contracted Cancer and died very quickly , then he was diagnosed with cancer also, he quit his job and returned to the UK where he was able to get quicker treatment. He wrote to me and said he wanted to share information with us that the local Port Company were keeping secret and that was that 7 people had come down with cancer from only 4 houses in Shakespear Bay. This along with all the reports of locals getting sick, dying of cancer or just suffering from chronic head aches combined with the fact that the Marlborough District council Air monitoring was showing evidence of Methyl Bromide over the town and harbor was enough for the Port Company to stop Fumigations with Methyl Bromide in Picton.

It looks to me as if the industry has done nothing about using the 10 yrs to develop the recapturing technology, they have waited for the clock to run down and have reapplied for another reassessment. this should not of been granted, your agency made its deliberation, this makes your previous decision look like a false promise, if the EPA reverses its decision it will never be trusted by the NZ public again in the future, dont allow your agency to be used as an industry puppet. Many people are finding this new reassessment incredulous, and are questioning its legality.

We have family members and friends working on and around the Picton water front and will not sit idly by if you continence the renewed use of Methyl Bromide without recapture.

10 yrs ago the people of Picton rose up and for the first time in our history , the people of Picton marched on Blenheim (Marlborough District Council Chambers.) we crammed that many people into that building you couldnt move .

The local council had never experienced that level of discontent ever, Believe me when I say that the people of Picton and I suspect Nelson also will not allow the health of our communities to be put at risk to subsidize the profits of an industry who have made no effort to build recapturing plants. Those days are gone !

I was recently told of an instance at the log port , before the fumigations stopped, one of the loader drivers died of cancer, he was replaced by a friend of mine, one day he and a colleague were working on a log barge at the waters edge in Port Shakespear when they were exposed to MB, some time latter my friend died of cancer, about 3 months ago his friend who had been working with him the day they were exposed to MB also died of cancer, his wife is convinced that it is a result of the exposure on that fatal day, she said that men where both ill for 2 days following that incident.

This is an industry that obviously has no environmental or social conscience, this was highlighted by them removing the stenching agent from the gas so the workers and public didnt know when they were exposed, This is criminal,I often wondered why ERMA never insisted on its use following the reassessment !

in this instance the EPA needs to step up and demonstrate a duty of care as Kaitiaki to protect the health of our port company workers and wider communities, put health and safety ahead of the economic argument.

We are not happy about this talk of using the alternative FDN to avoid recapture which has high levels of Hydrogen Cyanide, ships that require fumigation should not be fumigated in Ports like Bluff, Nelson Picton, Wellington Tauranga , they should steam them to North Port, Marsden Point where industry should be required to build a large recapture facility so that civilian populations are not subject to health risks.

Nordico as well as other companies both here and in the USA have the technology to construct these facilities.

This industry obviously has not taken your 10 yr period of grace seriously, they have taken it to the wire and obviously expect you to change your directive and put the economic argument ahead of Health and safety.

They will argue that the export of logs requiring fumigation has dramatically increased and that the importing countries insist on the logs being fumigated before they leave our shores, this is not a valid argument , these increases were predicted 10 yrs ago.

I believe that this is an industry with no integrity, both them ,district councils and government agencies have hardened their hearts to the fact that significant numbers of workers associated with the ports have already died of cancers and MS, the decision that communities who live in the ports all around NZ and all families who have loved ones working in the industry are looking to you as kaitiaki to ensure their health and safety .

Remember that many councils dont have Air Plans yet, this is a human rights issue, people and workers have a right to breath clean unpolluted air and without recapture, this poison ends up in our atmosphere as one of the worst ozone depleters and ultimately ends up in the Moana.

Noho Ora Mai,

Pete Beech.