

Submission Form

Marine Consents and Marine Discharge Consents Application

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SUBMISSION115993

Submitter Name:

Russell

Katherine

Waitakere Ranges Protection Society Inc.

Hard Copy Form

Incomplete Submission

Marine Consents and Marine Discharge Consents Application

Application Name: Trans-Tasman Resources Limited iron sand extraction and processing application

EPA Reference: EEZ000011

Applicant: Trans-Tasman Resources Limited

Notification Date: 17 September 2016

Submissions Close: Extension of submission period to 5:00pm, Monday 14 November 2016
Originally submission period was to close 5:00pm, Friday 14 October 2016

3. Electronic correspondence

You will receive information by email. If you are unable to receive emails, please indicate below:

I cannot receive electronic copies of information and updates

4. Do you wish to speak to your submission at the hearing?*

I / We **do not wish** to speak about my / our submission at the hearing.

OR

I / We **wish** to speak about my / our submission at the hearing.

If you **wish to speak** at the hearing, tick as many as apply to you:

If others make a similar submission, I / we will consider presenting a joint case with them at the hearing.

I / we wish to present in Te Reo Māori.

I / we wish to present in New Zealand Sign Language.

I / we intend on having legal representation (i.e. a lawyer speaking on your behalf).

I / we intend to have expert witnesses to support my / our submission.

5. What decision do you want the EPA to make and why?*

If you require more space, please attach additional pages. Please include your name, page numbers and *Trans-Tasman Resources Limited iron sand extraction and processing application* on the additional pages.

- Grant
- Grant with conditions
- Neutral
- Decline

My reasons for seeking this decision are:

Please see attached submission

6. Do you have an existing interest that may be affected by what is proposed in this application?

- Lawfully established existing activity, whether or not authorised by or under any Act or Regulations, including rights of access, navigation and fishing
- Any activity that may be undertaken under the authority of an existing marine consent
- Any activity that may be undertaken under the authority of an existing resource consent granted under the Resource Management Act 1991
- Settlement of a historical claim under the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975
- Settlement of a contemporary claim under the Treaty of Waitangi as provided for in an Act, including the Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992
- Protected customary right or customary marine title as recognised under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011

What is your existing interest and how may it be affected by this application?

If you would like to attach any supporting documents please do so below.



WRPS-Submission on seabed mining.pdf
Adobe Acrobat Document
434 KB

Only ONE PDF or Word document with a maximum size limit of 15MB can be attached to this submission form. Please forward larger files or file types other than PDF or Word, or multiple documents directly to the EPA on a CD or DVD or USB stick.

Email Address

I wish to receive a copy of my completed submission via email.



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14 October 2016

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TTRLApplication@epa.govt.nz

RE: Trans-Tasman Resources Limited (TTRL) application for marine consents and marine discharge consents

I am writing on behalf of the Waitakere Ranges Protection Society (WRPS) to submit on the application by TTRL for marine consents and marine discharge consents.

Background on the WRPS

The WRPS was incorporated in 1973. Its purpose is the conservation and protection of the Waitakere Ranges and to oppose any activity that may threaten or adversely affect the natural environment in the area, including the coastal and marine environment.

WRPS and its members are strong advocates for the conservation and protection of the natural environment of the Waitakere Ranges and was one of the key groups promoting the concept of the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area (WRHA) for 35 years before it was achieved through an Act of Parliament in 2008.

Position on the proposal

We oppose the application in full as the proposed mining will devastate the marine environment within the mining area, and have significant and unacceptable negative impacts on the surrounding marine area. The application does not satisfy the purpose of the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 (the EEZ Act), in particular the assessment of environmental effects is insufficient and fails to remedy, avoid or mitigate the significant environmental effects of the proposal.

Impact of the proposal

We consider that the TTRL proposal will have long-term adverse impacts on our environment through damaging sea-bed life, reducing access to fishing and recreational space, and impacting the Maui and Hector's dolphins and other marine mammals. While these impacts may occur in the near vicinity to the proposal, they will cause repercussions along the west coast of New Zealand, including near the Waitakere Ranges. In particular, this impact will effect marine wildlife, like the Maui dolphin. Much like the kiwi, the Maui dolphin is an important part of New Zealand's natural heritage and to our unique west coast identity. The Maui dolphin is the world's rarest and smallest known subspecies of dolphin. Its survival may be dependent on the opportunity to interbreed with the Hector's dolphins, which are known to travel through the application subject area to the Waitakere Ranges coast where they interact with the Maui dolphin population. For the Maui dolphin to survive, human induced impacts, and deaths in particular, must be avoided for the foreseeable future. Therefore, the precautionary approach must be taken in regards to any potential risks of seabed mining to this species.

The project will also have a significant effect on the coastal processes, particularly by removing non-renewable sand resources that supply west coast beaches, including along the Waitakere Ranges. This will cause further coastal erosion and disruption to natural processes. The black-sand beaches of the west coast are iconic and a unique environment that will be placed at risk by the project. In addition, more sustainable economic activities such as tourism and filming, which provide significant economic benefit to West Auckland¹, will be placed at risk by the likely damage to the coastal environment.

Concerns with the Assessment of Environmental Effects

We have a number of issues with the application and its assessment of environmental impacts, particularly its accuracy, methodologies and consideration of all effects.

- The applicant has not provided information on whether regeneration of the seabed ecology will occur, or if it is even possible, following the removal of up to 11 m of seabed.
- The applicant has failed to consider all the sediment discharges in seabed modelling e.g. fine sediments in the clean desalinated water to be discharged. Consequently, the indirect impacts to the marine life are understated and there will be significant effects including physiological and avoidance (e.g. avoiding the area of discharge) on marine wildlife as well as long term contamination of the ecosystem over time.
- The issues report highlights that the sediment plume modelling is inaccurate, particularly through not covering all potential discharges and that the peer-review could not confirm the accuracy of inputs. Given the impacts of the plume, including the suspension of fine sediments in the water for days that affect phytoplankton, zooplankton and light penetration, it is of serious concern that the modelling is inaccurate and understates the impacts. In addition, we need more research to understand the impact of sediment in deep-sea environments as the effects in shallow waters cannot be extrapolated to deep-sea waters.
- There have been no surveys of marine mammals or seabirds in the area and their use of the environment. This makes it impossible to determine the significance of the effects on marine mammal wildlife. Previous studies have found at risk species including Maui and Hector's dolphins, blue whales potentially including a nursery, and Southern right

¹ In 2014/15, the production and post production screen industry (excluding television broadcasting) had a gross revenue of \$700 million in Auckland (Stats NZ) and revenues are regularly increasing.

whales in these areas. Without an assessment, there is no understanding of the impacts on these species or any proposals to mitigate the impacts. In addition, surveys of deep sea environments almost always record new species – and it is considered that we have only recorded about a quarter of species so far – meaning we need a much better understanding of the existing environment before we can start to assess the impacts of the proposal².

- There could be significant biosecurity risks associated with ships and equipment coming into the area from outside the EEZ. It is vital that these risks are assessed and, if the project was to proceed, proper mitigations established to avoid establishment of any introduced marine species.
- The economic and social benefits of the project are overstated and are unlikely to accrue to New Zealand Inc. Any benefits that do accrue are likely to be minimal, estimated at \$50 million, and barely offset the likely environmental and social costs of the project. The social effects are also inadequately assessed and contradictory. Under the social assessment in the impact assessment report, it is stated that the jobs are likely to be 'fly in, fly out' jobs, and therefore will not be in the local area (avoiding the negative impacts of temporary workforces in rural areas). However, it later claims that the project will provide employment for locals that are higher paid than the local average, thus providing a benefit to the local area. These claims cannot both be true and either one would result in negative social impacts that outweigh the social benefits.
- The applicant has failed to properly consider mana whenua interests in the area or properly consult local iwi.

Overall, the issues with the application, the assessment of environmental effects, and the proposed mitigation and monitoring, show that the applicant has not proven that their proposal is safe for the marine environment and poses no threat to future sustainability. In addition, the National Institute of Water and Atmosphere has said we do not understand the structure of deep-sea communities or the potential impacts of seabed mining and its associated sediment discharges², meaning we cannot accurately assess these issues.

Under the EEZ Act (s10, s59(2) and s61) a precautionary approach must be applied to ensure the marine environment is protected. Based on the evidence, we recommend the proposal is declined in full.

We have asked Kiwis Against Seabed Mining to speak on our behalf at the hearing.

Yours sincerely



John Edgar ONZM
President
Waitakere Ranges Protection Society

² \$3.7m study to reveal deep-sea mining impacts, NZ Herald, Tuesday 11 October.