



Presentation notes to Decision Making Committee, Environmental Protection Authority

Tuesday, 29 November 2018

Tēnā koutou katoa,

1. Thank you for the invitation to provide advice to the Decision-Making Committee under section 56 of the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf Act 2012 regarding the Coastal Resources Limited Application – EEZ100015.
2. The Hauraki Gulf Forum is a statutory body formed under the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000.
3. Unlike other submitters, the Forum is not an expert witness.
4. The Forum has representation on behalf of the Ministers for Conservation, Primary Industries and Māori Affairs, elected representatives from Auckland Council (including Great Barrier Island and Waiheke Island Local Boards), Waikato Regional Council, the Waikato, Hauraki Thames-Coromandel and Matamata-Piako District Councils, and representatives of the tangata whenua of the Hauraki Gulf and its islands.
5. The Forum is charged with the promotion, facilitation and coordination of integrated management and the protection and enhancement of the Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana.
6. The marine environment in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park encompasses deep oceanic waters, shallow coastal seas, bays, inlets, harbours and broad intertidal flats.
7. The complexity and nature of the physical environment is reflected in a diverse and highly productive marine ecosystem.
8. There are over 400 islands in the Marine Park, and these are critical refuge for rare plants and endangered species, with 47 of the islands being declared pest free. Endemic birds, reptiles and insects are increasingly being translocated to the pest free islands.
9. The Gulf's productive waters and predator-free islands provide safe breeding grounds for seabirds. When it comes to birds, the Gulf is internationally important – it's considered a globally significant seabird biodiversity hotspot. The Gulf is home to seabird species that *only* breed in the Gulf and a number of these endemic species are nationally vulnerable – including the storm petrel, the New Zealand fairy tern and the black petrel.
10. The Firth of Thames is an internally important feeding area for wading birds and is recognised through its designation as a wetland of international importance (RAMSAR).
11. The Gulf is also home to the Bryde's Whale. Listed as a nationally critical species, the Gulf contains one of the few known resident populations of Bryde's Whales in the world. The

national population is estimated to be less than 250 mature individuals, with around 46 of these residing in the Gulf.

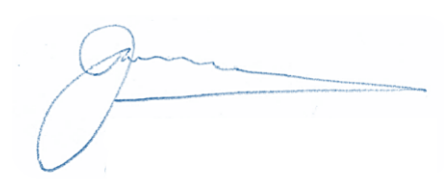
12. The Gulf is also one of the earliest places of human settlement in New Zealand and has a rich human history. It has sustained tangata whenua for many generations.
13. Many people identify with the Marine Park and it is widely used for recreation. The Gulf is lived in and worked in – used for marine commerce, commercial fishing and transport.
14. The Forum is required to present triennial reports regarding the State of the Gulf. The fifth such report was released earlier this year in March 2018 and we made copies available to you to inform your decision-making process.

<https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/harbour-forums/docsstateofgulf/state-gulf-full-report.pdf>

15. Our report outlined a range of issues affecting the Hauraki Gulf including:
 16. Population growth and development are putting pressure on urban infrastructure, in particular the management of water (wastewater and stormwater). Whilst improvements are being made and planned for the management of wastewater and stormwater, the pace of change is outstripping the ability of current management frameworks to respond effectively.
 17. In addition to the pressure on urban infrastructure, increased development drives demand for more aggregates and amenities and naturally drives changes to land use.
 18. Following large-scale changes in land-use and land disturbance activities, sediment accumulation in coastal environments is now a serious concern and focus for a number of the Forum's constituent parties. Sedimentation is a serious environmental contaminant that degrades coastal habitats and is toxic to many marine organisms. It is the 3rd highest ranking threat to marine habitats in New Zealand. It is ranked equal to the threat posed by bottom trawling. Ocean acidification and climate change are ranked greatest and second greatest threats.
 19. Increasing popularity of the Hauraki Gulf as a destination also brings added pressure and risk, including risks to biosecurity. As well as a large volume of international, national and local vessel movements, high numbers of tourists now visit the Gulf's islands and marine reserves, seeking out experiences such as dolphin, whale and bird watching.
 20. The effects of climate change are expected to become more pronounced throughout the 21st century and will compound the effects of other stressors. Climate Change is predicted to cause the Gulf to become warmer and more acidic, increasing the risks associated with invasive species, amongst other things.
 21. Fish stocks in the Gulf are not healthy. Of the top 15 finfish caught in the Hauraki Gulf, only four are judged to be at or above sustainable populations. Crayfish stocks are the lowest in New Zealand and basically negligible in most parts of the Gulf.

22. It is a fragile environment and our State of our Gulf report highlights that cumulative pressure on the marine environment is mounting as the population growth, development and commercial and recreational pressures continue to mount.
23. Only 0.3% of the Gulf has marine protection under six marine reserves. There is now strong and growing public support for more protected marine areas and this requires corresponding stronger political priority to progress and implement new legislation. The Government's announcement last week to establish a Ministerial Advisory Group to advance work on recommendations of the Sea Change Tai Timu Tai Pari Marine Spatial Plan will include a focus on marine protected areas.
24. The proposal from CRL Ltd is for a large increase in the quantum of material to be dumped over a long period of time. There is risk associated in all activities and we bring to attention two risks which we see being exacerbated by the quantity of material being proposed for dumping.
25. The proposed dumping site is just outside the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park boundary and is in very deep water off the continental shelf. However, the proposal is for a large increase in the quantum of material to be dumped over a very long period.
26. Given the time scales, the significant amount of material and large volume of vessel movements likely, we consider that there is increased risk of biosecurity issues for the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park. Transmission risks are increased by large numbers of vessel movements and further exacerbated by the dumped material being from highly modified marina environments. The unknown current flows around the dumping site are also of concern.
27. We ask the Committee to examine and consider whether the biosecurity risks arising from a large volume of vessel movements, the sources of the material and ocean current flows are being appropriately assessed and managed.
28. In addition, the fact that this material must be carried across Gulf waters to reach the site also raises risks considerably. Experience suggests that loads have had to be dumped en-route to dumping sites when weather or operational adversities have occurred. With the large number of vessel movements needed to move the material envisaged, this risk must be treated with extreme caution.
29. We suggest that this risk is highest during extreme weather events, the frequency and severity of which is increasing with the effects of climate change.
30. We ask the Committee to consider whether monitoring of transportation of the material across the Gulf to ensure compliance and expediency has been considered and will be appropriately managed.
31. These risk factors, combined with the current issues already present in the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park, generally mean that our Members have a preference for land-based disposal if possible.
32. Finally, we note that the Department of Conservation and the Aotea Local Board, both of whom are constituent parties of the Hauraki Gulf Forum have opposed the application by Coastal Resources Ltd.

Ngā mihi nui,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop on the left and a long, thin horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John Meeuwsen

Chairperson, Hauraki Gulf Forum

NB: Guidance on the EPA website suggests that we should "Prepare speaking notes or a summary of your submission to read at the hearing and bring 10 copies and one electronic copy to the hearing to give to the Hearing Manager."