

Water Conservation Order: Te Waikoropupū Springs and Associated Waterbodies

Submission Reference no: 169

R & C Chubb (Partnership) (Robert and Cherrie Chubb)

Submitter Type: Organisation

Source: Web Form

Overall Notes:

Clause

The specific parts of the application that my/our submission relates to are:

Notes

Section 5 and 6. We have concerns over what is deemed to be a 'natural state'. The rivers in the Takaka catchment are in many regards modified and have been for years for better or worse. The Takaka River flow is hugely influenced by the Cobb Dam. Stop banks and river protection works have been undertaken along many river banks, exotic species planted and introduced (ie willows, poplars, trout, salmon, didymo) and gravel extracted. With the inescapable effects of climate change upon us and the increasingly erratic and intensified weather events experienced we are concerned that further work to mitigate against future flooding will be hindered by these clauses and question just what 'natural' means. Section 8. We have a current consent to extract water from the Arthur Marble Aquifer. We are specifically concerned over sub-clause 'a.' How will the extent of the active flood plan be identified and monitored? Is it the floodplain created in an annual event, or a 1 in 5, 10, or even 50 year event? In wet weather tomo fill with surface water which slowly gets absorbed into ground waters. Is that water, as it sits on the surface deemed to be part of the aquifer floodplain, is it when it enters the gravels or the aquifer itself? Does the rain intensity get taken into account? 100mm of rain over 2 hours will have a different effect than 100mm of rain over 10 hours. How do we know or establish whether our water take has had any measurable or identified impacts on floodplain levels when there is so much natural variation? This clause has the potential to effect our ability to renew our consent. Section 9. We are concerned that the proposed water quality limits and trigger values for toxicants (as identified in schedule 4 and 5) will impact on the continued viability of our business. We are dairy farmers, milking 150 cows on a dairy platform of 56ha. We also own and lease three run off blocks, one that borders the Waingaro River and one that borders both the Waingaro and Takaka Rivers. We use industry best practice to guide and inform our on farm practices and comply with existing regulatory monitoring. Our concerns relate to how the figures were decided upon and how they relate to the current quality of the waterways. How will breaches to any of the water quality limits be correctly attributed to the original source of contamination or degradation? Is the aim to maintain the current quality or to make it increasingly prestine? At what cost and to whom? How much influence do/or will our farming practices have on those figures and trigger values and what are the implications to our current practices for the future? We think any such figures would need to be very well researched and based on sound, reasoned scientific findings and specific to this unique catchment, it's geology and weather patterns. Also that one industry or sector of the community is not held wholly responsible for issues or problems that is due to a multitude of contributing factors, over a substantial period of time, that many or not be in their power to control or influence in any significant way. Our concerns are that to meet the proposed standards farming as we practice it at present (including current effluent discharge to land, use of fertilisers and weed sprays and dairy detergents) will no longer be a permitted activity and that future legislation and restrictions may make our current simple farming business untenable. There has been farming in Golden Bay for 150 years and the current quality of the waterways remain. We would like to think that workable limits for key nutrients and contaminants can be found that preserve our ability to continue to have both quality water and waterways AND continued profitable farming in the Takaka catchment. Section 12. Although we believe the intent of this section is to protect the existing consent holders we are concerned around the technicalities and timing of renewing consents. We understand that a resource consent is only valid for the time it is issued for. Once it expires it is a new consent that is applied for (not a renewal of an expired one). As existing consents are due to expire during the time that deliberations on this application are likely to be being made we are concerned that we may inadvertently find ourselves in a position where the TDC are unable or unwilling to process new consents, leaving us vulnerable to being effectively locked out from gaining a new consent and thus loosing the use of water we rely on for our business. Irrigation has been used on the dairy platform effectively for 30 years. On average 85 days of irrigating are done per season via K-line sprinklers. Our land has a very stoney profile prohibiting it being worked up for the establishment of crops to buffer grass growing deficits. We operate a System 5 farm that is low input, grass only. In times of slow growth we rely on stored home grown feed and the strategic use of irrigation. The infrastructure of our farming operation has been built up over 3 generations to enable us to maintain an efficient economically successful business, but one reliant on continued access to irrigation.

Clause

What is/are your view/s on the application?

Position

Oppose (Please provide the reasons why with reference to section 199 and 207 of the RMA)

Notes

Whilst we recognise the unique geology that exists in Golden Bay and that Te Waikoropupu Springs are indeed outstanding and deserve protection as per section 199 of the RMA we have deep concerns over the implications of the proposed draft Conservation Order on the viability of our farming operation. We would prefer to see the FLAG process re-established and their recommendations adopted by TDC. Restrictions on the way we operate as farmers need to be workable, realistic and scientifically sound. Future work on flood protection measures need to be considered. Continued gravel build up and the effects of climate change resulting in more frequent and intense storm systems will increase the frequency and severity of flooding. Council and land owners need to have the ability to manage such risk. Section 200 of the RMA subclass (b) states that a water conservation order restrictions or prohibitions to "the maximum and minimum levels or flow range". Our concerns are that this proposed conservation order will make future flood mitigation more difficult, or in fact impossible, and will result in more frequent and increased damage from flooding. Section 207 of the RMA identifies in sub section (b) that regard is given to "the needs of primary and secondary industry, and of the community". We are farmers who stand (as primary industry) to be directly and indirectly affected by the current proposals. We are also long standing community members. Our children are 6th generation Golden Bay residents whose forebears have been farming in the Valley for over 150 years. Farming is generational and historically significant to the development of Golden Bay, as it is to the current members of our family. We spend nearly every day working in the environment in a manner that has seen the quality of our waterways maintained in it's current state. We have deep respect for and duty of care over the land we manage. Our livelihood and the pride we take from doing our job as farmers well depend on it. We are fully open to adopting 'best practice' initiatives and acknowledge that new and improved methods are constantly evolving but maintain that they need to be driven by soundly researched, scientifically robust data. . Six generations of our family have lived their lives in Golden Bay. Cherrie's forebears arrived in the Bay in 1856 and have lived along and with the rivers and streams ever since. Lindsays Bridge is named after her great-great grandfather and his brother who farmed in the area. Incidentally they were the first to cut a track over the Takaka hill to open up access to Riwaka. Another relative donated to the conservation estate the Paines Ford scenic reserve (with it's stunning limestone rock formations and bush remnants). Through the generations the family has enjoyed the endured the waterways. Many generations of kids learnt to swim in the rivers, have enjoyed exploring it's banks, fishing and hunting along them. Water has been taken for domestic and farming use and for 30 years for irrigation. There have also been the innumerable instances of flooding and the damage it's caused to deal with. Lost pasture, fences and stock. Land washed away. Silt and debris deposited. Flooded roads and damaged bridges and fords. In more recent times we have had the benefit of more accurate weather forecasting and electronic river flow monitoring to help inform. We are long standing members of this community. We have been contributors to it for many many years. We buy a range of goods and services from businesses in the Bay. Under this proposal we are a part of the community who stand to be impacted upon hugely. The viability of our business is at stake, as is the flow on effect to local business who we support. We can not support this water conservation order as it stands. As an observation on our community, as the FLAG process identified, there are strong and polarising views held. We believe that it is possible that considered, workable protections for maintaining the quality of Te Waikoropupu Springs can be reached that will satisfy the majority without being ruinous to certain sectors and hope that an open minded, cooperative mindset is brought to the table by all sides. Also that through this process greater understanding and respect for the values of all effected parties are considered.

Clause

I/we seek the following recommendation from the Special Tribunal to the Minister for the Environment

Position

Decline the order

Notes

We would like to see the issues referred back to the FLAG group and their recommendations adopted by the TDC

Clause

Would you like to present your views on this submission to the Special Tribunal at a public hearing?

Position

I/we do want to present my/our views at a public hearing

Notes**Clause**

If others make a similiar submission, would you want to consider presenting a joint case with them at the hearing?

Position

No

Notes

The submitter have elected to withhold their personal details from publication.