

From: Otago Regional Council <notifications@engagementhq.com>
Sent: Sunday, 3 May 2020 2:55 pm
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Anonymous User completed Submission Form – Proposed Water Permits Plan Change (Plan Change 7) to the Regional Plan: Water

Anonymous User just submitted the survey 'Submission Form – Proposed Water Permits Plan Change (Plan Change 7) to the Regional Plan: Water' with the responses below.

Full name of submitter

Amanda Currie

Name of organisation (if applicable)

Tinwald Farm Holdings Limited

Email

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Postal Address (or alternative method of contact)

Tinwald Farm, 1599 Luggate Cromwell Road, Mt Pisa, 9383

Phone number

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Do you wish to be heard in support of your submission?

(Being 'heard' means speaking at a hearing)

Yes

If others have made a similar submission, would you consider presenting a joint case with them at a hearing?

Yes

Could you gain an advantage in trade competition from this submission?

No

Are you directly affected by an effect of the plan change that:

a) adversely affects the environment; and

b) does not relate to trade competition or the effects of trade competition

I am not

State what your submission relates to and if you support, oppose, or want it amended:

(e.g. support rule 'x', or amend policy 'y')

This submission relates to Plan Change 7. We oppose Plan Change 7 in its entirety. Background Tinwald Farm is a 744 hectare property 16km north of Cromwell. Our farm rises from the edge of the Clutha River to the foothills of the Mt Pisa Range. Historically a dryland sheep and beef unit, utilising border dyke and flood irrigation, the farm has over the last 10 years invested heavily in centre pivot irrigation in order to utilise its available water more effectively and efficiently, and to grow our business (we currently have 400 hectares under irrigation). We have also developed 20 hectares of pinot noir vineyard with the view to diversifying our business further. Both these initiatives have required heavy up-front investment, well in excess of \$5 million. Our ongoing business is better diversified and delivers better outcomes for the region and the environment (see further discussion later) but does depend heavily on the reliability of water. We make a conscious effort to use local businesses as suppliers and contractors whenever possible. Our annual business operating expenses in the year ended 31 May 2019 were in excess of \$1.7 million supporting numerous jobs and businesses in the local community. We have plans in progress over the next 3 to 5 years to construct a further 10 hectare vineyard, 6 on-site worker dwellings, a dedicated sheep milking facility and a commercial cheesery (all three due for completion in 2020) and a winery and storage "cave" (planned for 2021) as well as an on site retail outlet (planned for 2021) selling food, our wine and produce, and tourist experiences. We plan to utilise the profits from our business to develop our ambition to regenerate the soils on our farm and thus to pursue our ambition to reduce climate change (by becoming two times carbon negative) and at the same time to increase the economic return from our farming investments. Our investments will also require additional employees from the region. We are passionately committed to the success of our people and our local community. We regard farming as the most important profession. We encourage our team to embark on a professional journey applying science to farming in an environmentally sympathetic way. We partner with the Otago Polytechnic to facilitate on farm training for agricultural students who are seeking real-life, hands-on experience before working in the local economy and further invest in the regions future. We source all water for our farm and vineyard operations through a small irrigation company, the Pisa Irrigation Company, in which we are one of a community of shareholders.

State what decision you want the Otago Regional Council to make:

(e.g. amend policy 'y' to say....)

Decision Sought We support the relief sought in the Otago Water Resource Users Group submission, namely and in order of preference: Option 1: That Plan Change 7 is declined in its entirety. This is our preferred option. b. Option 2: That Plan Change 7 is declined in its entirety and amendment are made to existing policies and methods in the Regional Plan: Water for Otago. c. Option 3: That Plan Change 7 is declined in its entirety and is replaced with: Simple transitional objectives and policies; Implemented by a permitted activity rule: and Supporting methods. An explanation of each of these methods is set out in the Otago Water Resource Users Group submission.

Give reasons for the decision you want made:

(e.g. I want policy 'y' changed because...)

The key reasons for our submission are that: Tinwald Farm has been working with the Pisa Irrigation Company on an application to replace the deemed permits that expire in 2021. We have been engaged in that process in good faith relying on the process set out by the ORC. In our view Plan Change 7 is unnecessary. It is unreasonable for the ORC as a public body to propose a new policy framework at this very late stage, involving considerable additional work and creating uncertainty for businesses such as ourselves. Our water comes from the Clutha River/Lake Dunstan and the tributaries flowing off the Pisa

Range into the Clutha River/Lake Dunstan. We have worked, and continue to work, on mitigating any effects of our farming on the tributaries and the Clutha River. By utilising our investment to generate reliable water and therefore income we have also been able to invest in looking after our land for future generations. We have protected wetlands on our farm close to the Clutha river. We have removed the ability for stock to access the tributaries that flow through our farm (the Lochar and Tinwald Creeks). We have concentrated development of vineyards in these areas with a view to ensuring that stock are kept away from the waterways. We have embraced regenerative agriculture values. Having reliable water allows us to be confident about our pastoral business through the seasons and years. So confident that we have been able to move towards regenerative agriculture, ceasing the practice of using synthetic fertiliser, and changing our farming practice to eliminate soil disturbance, run off and erosion, and instead using plant biomass and focussed stock grazing to improve the water holding capacity of our soil and to capture CO₂ and return it to the soil. It is our view that Plan Change 7 has been drafted with little consideration of the different catchments in Otago and their particular values or issues. There is no allocation issue in relation to our water takes. And nor are there water quality issues in our water. However, the holding pattern created by Plan Change 7 is unnecessary and not required for our area. As a business we need long term permits to facilitate and support investment decisions. For our investment to date of around \$5 million we need a much longer period of confidence of say 20 to 25 years. In our view six years as set out in Plan Change 7 is completely unreasonable. Policies In terms of particular Policies that will affect us, we make the following submissions: Proposed Policy 10A.2.1(b) that there is no increase in the area under irrigation will impact our business severely because we have plans in progress to develop a further 10 hectares of vineyard. We have already invested in this area and further investment will allow us to offer greater local employment (we have already invested significantly in worker dwellings in anticipation of this) as well as secure economies of scale in our production and to build a range of wines, ports and gins that will enable us to develop a distillery and winery on the property. Is it our ambition to capture value for the region by capitalising on the Central Otago Pinot Noir reputation and on the region's attraction to tourists. Proposed 10A.2.1(e) that there is a reduction in the volume of water allocated for abstraction will result in reduction of the water allocation for us. The result is that we will likely have insufficient water to ensure successful production of vineyard grapes or finishing of livestock on pasture. This will impact us by creating significant economic pressure, since our investment in water is designed to protect us from the vagaries of climatic dry conditions. This would render our investment in regenerative agriculture and in precision watering (via pivot irrigation and vineyard irrigation) useless and would inflict considerable and devastating financial pressures on us. We would likely have to significantly curtail our plans with significant losses to the region in terms of economic activity. Rules We oppose Rules 10A.3.1 because of the limit it imposes on the area of land able to be irrigated and the methodology that is proposed to be used to calculate the rate of take and volume of water. Our reasoning regarding limits on irrigable area is set out above. The methodology set out in Schedule 10a.4 we believe is seriously flawed. The rates of take and volume limits will be based on averages calculated over a period for which we do not have complete data, no account will be taken of seasonal variation requirements, the constraints imposed on the area irrigate and there is no mechanism for assessing the actual water needs of irrigators. The averaging of water that has been abstracted has the result of taking water from us that has been actually used not just "paper" water. We also oppose this Rule because it would appear to include dams authorised by deemed permits. We understand this to be the situation for the Fraser Dam, in this the Pisa Irrigation Company has an interest that is fundamental to that company's operation. There are special specific requirements relevant to dams that need to be taken into account, which the proposed plan Change 7 does not acknowledge or provide for. We oppose the Council's proposal to reserve control over a number of matters. Of particular concern is the intent to reserve control over: The volume and rate of water taken etc. As explained earlier we are concerned about the negative impact the methodology to be used will have on the water allocation and use of the Pisa Irrigation Company; Efficiency of water use, because there is no guidance on how this would be assessed and the certainty required to support investment in these areas will not exist with the proposed 6 year or even 15 year permit renewals; and Minimum flow etc, it is unclear if this means minimum flows will be applied or not. One of our water takes is directly from the Clutha and the others are from tributaries of the Clutha. There are no minimum flows as yet even though the ORC has been working on the task for years. The ORC can add the minimum flow to the consents through the review clause once they have the minimum flow operative in the plan. Section 32 Evaluation Our concerns with the Section 32 evaluation are substantially covered in the submission made by the Otago

Water Resource Users Group submission, with which we agree. The statement in the evaluation that the proposed Plan Change 7 will provide for social and economic well-being is, in our view, completely wrong and we regard the cost benefit analysis in the evaluation of the economic and social impacts of restricting access to water and the areas to be irrigated to be woefully inadequate and incapable of being defended as a matter of public law. This is particularly so in the case of the Pisa Irrigation Company's command area given their primary water source is the Clutha River.