



## SUBMISSION BY THE ADVOCATES FOR THE TONGARIRO RIVER ON THE NATURAL AND BUILT BILL

The Advocates for the Tongariro River Inc was formed as a result of our concern about the damage caused by the 1998 Tongariro River flood. This required a petition to Parliament for remedy. The Advocates' aim is to preserve and enhance the environment of the Tongariro River catchment, and to ensure that the river retains its importance as the Trout fishing capital of the world.

We do not support the Bill in its current form, and we wish to appear before the Committee to support our submission.

We agree that the RMA can benefit from reform, but seek the following changes to the Bill to ensure the protection of New Zealanders' rightful access to and enjoyment of our natural environment. Specifically:

1. The Bill should explicitly state that the protection and enhancement of public access to and enjoyment of the natural environment for recreational activities and well-being is a key outcome. It is a quintessential aspect of living in New Zealand and a huge contributor to the quality of life of so many. While the Bill does include "enhanced public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes and rivers" as a system outcome, we consider that is too narrow in scope and in particular it should recognise the importance of the enablement of appropriate recreational activities.
2. The Bill should focus on overall ecological health as an outcome, which includes but should not be limited to or unreasonably restricted by indigenous biodiversity. Many introduced species of flora and fauna are held in high value by New Zealanders and add positively to the environment.
3. In particular, the Bill should retain the current requirements of the RMA with respect to the protection of the habitat of trout and salmon. As well as being of significant value for the recreation and well-being of New Zealanders, the fresh water fishery is a key tourism asset and contributes over \$1 billion p.a. to the New Zealand economy (NZFFA 2020 estimate based on previous DOC and Cawthron Institute studies).
4. The Bill should ensure that all those with interests and rights, including public interests and Iwi/hapu rights and interests, in a region must be engaged collaboratively in decision making in and for that region. This is a core democratic principle and right.

Carl Bergstrom

Committee Representative