



MP for West Coast-Tasman

Minister of Agriculture

Minister for Biosecurity

Minister for Food Safety

Minister for Rural Communities

Minister of State for Trade and Export Growth

MIN19-0929

David Parker  
Minister for the Environment  
Parliament Building

01 SEP 2019

Dear Hon David Parker

**Comprehensive review of the resource management system: scope and process for the second stage of work to review the resource management system**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the proposed comprehensive review of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA).

I recognise the significance of the proposed review of the RMA and acknowledge its function as the principal statute for managing New Zealand's natural and physical resources, including the built environment.

I have a strong interest in how rural land and soils would be managed in New Zealand, and how the food and fibre sector would be regulated under any new regime. I also recognise the need for:

- better management of cumulative effects of land use activities;
- communities being able to adapt and be resilient to climate change impacts;
- improved spatial planning including for balancing the needs for urban growth and for preserving elite and high quality soils in rural areas close to our largest cities and towns;
- less complexity and cost to enable more effective and efficient implementation; and
- stronger monitoring, compliance and enforcement by those institutions charged with that responsibility.

The review will need to fully consider the impact of the new proposals. In particular, consideration of implementation challenges and the likely financial impact on the primary sector including farm businesses, rural communities and the economy will be critical. For example, the farming sector's ability to access to extra capital and changes in the value of land may affect their equity.

I have concerns about local government's capacity to deliver environmental outcomes effectively, particularly in compliance and enforcement. I would like to ensure that the review looks at the capacity for local government to be able to implement any new regime.

I also support clear transitional provisions embedded in the review to reduce the uncertainty and risk for land users and local government when implementing any changes.

I support engaging with Māori as Treaty partners throughout the review. Māori have a special relationship with the natural environment through their culture and traditions and the RMA has an important influence on our natural resources.

Thank you for your commitment to having the primary sector represented on the Expert Advisory Group. I also encourage the Panel to commit to engaging effectively with the rural community throughout the review process.

I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss these issues.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'D' followed by a series of loops and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Hon Damien O'Connor  
**Minister of Agriculture**

Proactively released