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Environment Canterbury
PO Box 345
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Submission on Consultation Document for Environment Canterbury Long Term Plan 2015/2025

The TBfree South Canterbury Working Group appreciates the opportunity to submit on the Environment Canterbury Consultation Document for the Long Term Plan 2015/2025.

The committee operates as a volunteer stakeholder representative group for OSPRI New Zealand which oversees the TBfree New Zealand programme. Our members represent the South Canterbury dairy, beef and deer sectors alongside Federated Farmers membership.

This submission relates directly to the pest management section of the discussion document where council intends on ending its collection of the regional contribution towards vector control for the national TB scheme. The committee accepts that in line with the review of funding for the TB scheme that councils will not collect this rate in the future and agree this statement should be part of the discussion document. However, we submit council should collect the rate for the 2015/2016 year to ensure a comprehensive vector programme be undertaken next year in Canterbury.

South Canterbury farmers are starting to see the benefits of the vast amount of possum control and ferret operations seen in the area over the past few decades. This progress has seen a number of operations being able to be ceased in the Hunter Hills area over the past 24 months, TB testing requirements easing last year for the Makenzie country farmers, and a large amount of eradication area proposed for the 2015/2016 year. This is testament to a well-structured programme which is giving value for money. This progress was only a pipe dream for many farmers a few years ago and as such any let up in the TB programme is not acceptable to farmers who have invested so much to get to this point. Farmers pay the majority of the regional contribution and are happy to pay this rate for one further year while our industries work through the future of the TB programme.

Whatever the collection method post 2015/2016, farmers now or in the future do not want to see a reduction in the investment directed to controlling TB until the risk of the disease has been eradicated. There is no chance an alternative source of funding will be implemented prior to the commencement of the 2015/16 financial year, so either the money is collected under the existing agreement or there is a short fall in the vector control budget for next year meaning there is a high risk of important work not being done due to the lack of regional share.

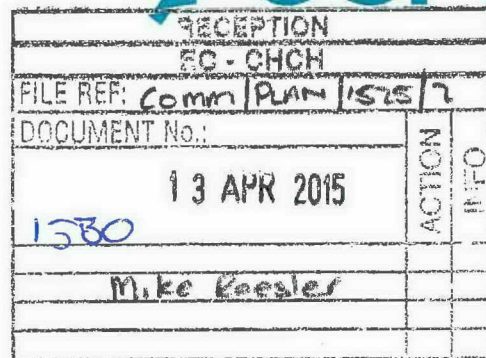
Other South Island regions are funding the transition year to ensure their TB control programmes are not compromised in anyway and we feel we should ensure that we are doing our part and having a consistent approach across the island.

Conclusion

We submit council should reconsider its position on collection of the regional contribution toward the TB plan for 2015/16 and ensure a complete programme is able to undertaken in the region. We acknowledge the funding model will be different post this transition funding year and there will be no collection for TB control via Environment Canterbury.

We wish to be heard in support of this submission.

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