

From: [ECInfo](#)
To: [Mailroom Mailbox](#)
Subject: FW: Long-Term Plan submission form [#59] EMAIL:04932824
Date: Wednesday, 8 April 2015 12:33:20 p.m.
Importance: Low

EC359349 – EC359348

Hello Team

This email came in through our Customer Services email. Can you please workflow?

Nga mihi

Christine

Customer Services

----- Original Message -----

From: no-reply@wufoo.com

Received: 8/04/2015 11:39 a.m.

To: ECInfo; Environment Canterbury; Services Customer; Services Customer;
Webmaster@ecan.govt.nz

Subject: Long-Term Plan submission form [#59]

| | |
|---|--|
| Your name * | Gert V'ant Klooster |
| Your organisation and role in it (if applicable) | Chairman – Lower Waitaki River Liaison Committee |
| Address * | |
| Postcode | |
| Contact phone number * | |
| Mobile number | |
| Email | |
| Date | Wednesday 8 April 2015 |
| Tick the box if you wish to discuss your submission in person | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes |

Your submission

Submission from Lower Waitaki River Control Scheme
Liaison Committee

Background

The Lower Waitaki River Control Scheme extends from the Waitaki Dam to the sea, and mitigates the flood and erosion risk to adjoining floodplain land and assets. The Scheme is administered by Environment Canterbury, but includes a significant portion in the Otago Regional Council area.

The Scheme Liaison Committee is a Sub-Committee of Environment Canterbury, made up

primarily of elected Scheme landowners and ratepayers.

The 2015–25 Long Term Plan proposes a change in the river management approach to “reduce reliance on heavy bank protection works, to pull back farming activities from the river banks, and develop vegetation buffer zones between the active river channel and farmland. This is expected to reduce the cost of the ongoing works programme by \$150,000.”

It also proposes to “align the rating of the Lower Waitaki Scheme with other major river protection Schemes....which means the targeted rate will increase from 20% to 42%, and the works & services and general rate components will each decrease from 20% to 9%”.

This submission opposes the Long Term Plan proposal as it stands.

Review

Over the past two years a joint Environment Canterbury and Otago Regional Council Technical Group has reviewed the Scheme in response to the following main concerns;

- Unsustainably high targeted rating levels within the Otago Region,
- Increasing flood damage costs and resulting large Scheme financial deficit.

Key factors identified as causes were;

- Clearance of vegetation buffer zones and encroachment of farm development closer to river banks,
- Increased property vulnerability to river bank erosion,
- Increased reliance on expensive heavy bank erosion protection works,
- Heavy catchment rainfall resulting in a higher than normal frequency of lower Waitaki floods,
- Long duration flood events modified by hydro–dam storage,
- Different catchment work funding policies within the Environment Canterbury and Otago Regions.

The draft Long Term Plan proposal referred to above was put in place at the recommendation of the Technical Group, but without agreement from the Liaison Committee or Scheme ratepayers.

Submission

The submission to follow addresses both the issues of Scheme river management approach and funding policy.

River Management Approach

The Committee supports the goals of pulling back farming activities and developing buffer zones.

They believe however that sustained high river flows and resulting river bank erosion, caused by an unusual cycle of catchment flooding as modified by hydro–dam flow release, has been the main factor creating the current funding deficit.

The proposed \$150,000 reduction would be achieved by removing heavy bank protection and related channel realignment work as river management tools. The Committee believes strongly that heavy bank protection is a vital tool to ensure the Scheme doesn’t deteriorate to the point that key Scheme buffer zones and groynes are lost. This would in turn result in ongoing loss of farmland and community assets.

The Committee opposes the proposed \$150,000 reduction in the works programme, but supports a \$70,000 reduction in works programme, which would enable those heavy protection works providing significant community benefit to continue.

Funding Policy

The Committee recognises that at face value current Scheme targeted rating levels appear low as a percentage of works expenditure, when compared to other comprehensive Schemes within Canterbury.

However the current funding approach was originally adopted with the agreement of Environment Canterbury, Meridian Energy, and the local community, recognising both the substantial effect of hydro-storage on increased riverbank erosion during flood events, and the significant environmental and recreational benefits to the wider community.

These benefits include;

- Increased open gravel river bed areas, providing vital habitat for a range of rare nesting birds,
- Vegetated buffer zones supporting a range of wetland habitats for native vegetation, fish, and birds,
- Maintenance of access for recreational fishing, boating, and picnicking.

It should also be recognised that the Scheme provides significant benefit to community assets and infrastructure such as roads, bridges, irrigation intakes, and power lines.

The current funding approach is 20% targeted, 20% Works & Services, and 20% General rates, with a 40% contribution from Meridian Energy.

The Long Term Plan proposal to “increase the targeted rate from 20% to 42%” is consistent with the funding approach applied to other comprehensive river schemes within Canterbury (i.e. 70% targeted, 15% Works & Services, and 15% General rate).

The Lower Waitaki Scheme is however different in that currently the Meridian Energy contribution is also eligible for General and Works & Services rating contributions, whereas under the Long Term Plan proposal it is not.

The Committee is willing to accept alignment with other comprehensive Schemes, but believes that the Meridian Energy contribution should continue to be treated as eligible for the Works & Services and General rate contributions.

This would result in an increase in targeted rate from 20% to 30% rather than to the 42% level proposed.

What do you want Environment Canterbury to do?

The Committee opposes the proposed \$150,000 reduction in the works programme, but supports a \$70,000 reduction in works programme, which would enable those heavy protection works providing significant community benefit to continue.

The Committee is willing to accept funding alignment with other comprehensive Schemes, but believes that the Meridian Energy contribution should continue to be treated as eligible for the Works & Services and General rate contributions. This would result in an increase in targeted rate from 20% to 30% rather than to the 42% level proposed.