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MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR FRESHWATER MANAGEMENT 2014

PURSUANT TO THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991

National Policy Statement For Freshwater Management 2014

JERRY MATEPARAE, Governor-General

Order in Council

At Wellington this 30th day of June 2014

Present:

His Excellency the Governor-General in Council

Pursuant to section 52(2) of the Resource Management Act 1991, His Excellency the Governor-General, acting on the advice and with the consent of the Executive Council and on the recommendation of the Minister for the Environment (having satisfied the requirements of that Act), approves the following national policy statement. The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011, *New Zealand Gazette*, 12 May 2011, No. 64, page 1482, is revoked with effect from the date of entry into effect of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014.

PREAMBLE

Fresh water is essential to New Zealand's economic, environmental, cultural and social well-being. Fresh water gives our primary production, tourism, and energy generation sectors their competitive advantage in the global economy. Fresh water is highly valued for its recreational aspects and it underpins important parts of New Zealand's biodiversity and natural heritage. Fresh water has deep cultural meaning to all New Zealanders. Many of New Zealand's lakes, rivers and wetlands are iconic and well known globally for their natural beauty and intrinsic values.

The Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi) is the underlying foundation of the Crown-iwi/hapū relationship with regard to freshwater resources. Addressing tāngata whenua values and interests across all of the well-beings, and including the involvement of iwi and hapū in the overall management of fresh water, are key to meeting obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi.

All New Zealanders have a common interest in ensuring the country's freshwater lakes, rivers, aquifers and wetlands are managed wisely.

New Zealand faces challenges in managing our fresh water to provide for all of the values that are important to New Zealanders. The quality, health, availability and economic value of our fresh waters are under threat. These challenges are likely to increase over time due to the impacts of climate change.

To respond effectively to these challenges and issues we need to have a good understanding of our freshwater resources, the threats to them and provide a management framework that enables water to contribute both to New Zealand's economic growth and environmental integrity and provides for the values that are important to New Zealanders.

Given the vital importance of freshwater resources to New Zealand and New Zealanders, and in order to achieve the purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act), the Crown recognises there is a particular need for clear central government policy to set a national direction, though the management of the resource needs to reflect the catchment-level variation between freshwater bodies and different demands on the resource across regions. This includes managing land use and development activities that affect fresh water so that growth is achieved with a lower environmental footprint.

This national policy statement sets out objectives and policies that direct local government to manage water in an integrated and sustainable way, while providing for economic growth within set water quantity and quality limits. The national policy statement is a first step to improve freshwater management at a national level.

As demand for fresh water increases, it is vital to account for all freshwater takes and sources of relevant contaminants. The freshwater accounting requirements of this national policy statement will provide information for councils to use in establishing freshwater objectives and limits and in targeting their management of fresh water.

This national policy statement provides a National Objectives Framework to assist regional councils and communities to more consistently and transparently plan for freshwater objectives. The national policy statement is intended to underpin community discussions about the desired state of fresh water relative to the current state. New Zealanders generally aspire to high standards for our waterways and outcomes that are better than those achieved under the status quo. Freshwater planning will require an iterative approach that tests a range of possible objectives and methods for their achievement, including different timeframes for achieving objectives. This is intended to ensure that the implications of proposed objectives are clear for councils and communities.

The national policy statement sets national bottom lines for two compulsory values – ecosystem health and human health for recreation – and minimum acceptable states for other national values. The national policy statement acknowledges iwi and community values by recognising the range of iwi and community interests in fresh water, including environmental, social, economic and cultural values.

Freshwater objectives for a range of tāngata whenua values are intended to recognise Te Mana o te Wai. Iwi and hapū have a kinship relationship with the natural environment, including fresh water, through shared whakapapa. Iwi and hapū recognise the importance of fresh water in supporting a healthy ecosystem, including human health, and have a reciprocal obligation as kaitiaki to protect freshwater quality.

Overall freshwater quality within a region must be maintained or improved. This national policy statement allows some variability in terms of freshwater quality, including between freshwater management units, as long as the overall freshwater quality is maintained within a region.

National bottom lines in the national policy statement are not standards that must be achieved immediately. Where freshwater management units are below national bottom lines, they will need to be improved to at least the national bottom lines over time. It is up to communities and iwi to determine the pathway and timeframe for ensuring freshwater management units meet the national bottom lines. Where changes in community behaviours are required, adjustment timeframes should be decided based on the economic effects that result from the speed of change. Improvements in