

TABLED AT HEARING

Application: ... RDRM ...
... Joint hearing ...
Date: ... 2/5/2018 ...

Fish Screen:

- The Rangitata Water Conservation Order 2002 (WCO) is clear in its content of prohibiting the removal of fish from the river during times of water abstraction. The history of the RDR is punctuated with evidence where fish (mainly salmon smolt), have regularly been able to enter the system in significant numbers, and then to be lost to the fishery. I see the current application as an opportunity to effectively and permanently rectify this situation and thereby hold the Applicant to account both ethically and legally pursuant to the WCO, and any consent requirements, should this application be granted.
- Attempts at fish screens by the Applicant to date, have been ineffective. The Applicant must now be held accountable in the monitoring, maintenance and regular reviews of the effectiveness of the proposed fish screen, whenever water is being taken. These reviews should be undertaken by an independent body, at the direction of the Applicant, with the review data being made freely and immediately available to all interested parties.
- The Applicant has requested a 2-year timeframe for installation of the fish screen, following the granting of any consent. This then effectively provides the opportunity for a further two seasons whereby fish are being taken from the river during water abstraction. This is unacceptable, and in my view, a period of 12 months is a sufficient timeframe for the fish screen to be installed. Such a project would have already been investigated by the Applicant, with design, construction and cost details, already to hand. If contractors can build a two lane, concrete, 144-metre-long bridge just north of Kaikoura in 3 months – in my view a tiny fish screen inside 12 months should be a walk in the park!!

- The granting of any consent in regard to this application **MUST** be accompanied by an effective and regular maintenance programme. There is little to be gained by the recreational fishery if the proposed fish screen is not regularly inspected and any maintenance is not carried out, in a timely manner. Any continuation from the key WCO requirement not to allow fish abstraction from the river, during times of water take, cannot be allowed to meander, as it has done in the past.

5 cumec take:

- It is my view that an effective fish by-pass system would be enhanced by using the non-consumable 5 cumecs, to “flush” fish back into the river system.
- The flushing of the accumulated fish at the screen, back into the river, must be a system whereby there is no mortality rate of fish, associated with this process.
- Passage of fish from the river at the outlet of the fish by-pass, should not be possible. At some point along the race a physical barrier should be installed, preventing any upstream migration of fish, to enter the fish screen or flushing area. While not knowing the design of the flushing by-pass race, it appears to me that it may present to the Applicant an opportunity to incorporate spawning areas in the lower portions of the flushing water channel, as it travels back towards the river.

10 cumecs: CRC 170654

- This is opposed. There are other options available to the Applicant and any further abstraction is not congruent with the WCO or recreational river users.

I call upon this Panel to be guided by the WCO when considering this application, by not granting any further water abstraction of consumable water from the Rangitata river, and by requiring the Applicant to install an effective water abstraction system that does not remove fish from the river.

At any time, if any of these consents are granted, there is a breach, that consent should be suspended IMMEDIATELY, until that breach is satisfactorily rectified.

I understand the current right to take water from the Rangitata, by the Applicant, expires on 2042. As the current abstraction and consent applications before the Panel are so intrinsically entwined, in my view it would be irresponsible of the Panel, to recommend the granting of any subsequent consent, that goes beyond 2042.

This is a huge opportunity for the Applicant and the Panel, to acknowledge the significance of the Rangitata river for ALL recreational users, and put right – what is not.

Thank you

Murray McMurtrie