

# MG & RM JOHNSTON

1165 Moerangi Road, RD1, Oparau 3885

18 March 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing this as a concerned neighbour of farmers in the River Catchment areas, and as a farmer who will eventually be affected by the proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change One.

My husband and I are farming a 127.8-hectare hill country property, currently running sheep and cattle, 150 breeding ewes and 50 beef breeding cows.

We are in the process of setting our stocking rates to numbers that the farm can run comfortably, supporting its mortgage, covering its running costs and hopefully providing us with a modest income.

Hill Country farming has always been marginal, and we need a certain amount of flexibility to adjust with market and climate changes. We already take practical steps to avoid soil erosion and water contamination.

As the photo's I have provided show, we have in place a trough water system that reduces livestock dependency on natural waterways. We use a limited amount of fertilizer and supplement it with a natural seaweed product. We take a sustainable approach to our farming operation as I believe hill country farmers in general do.

At a time when Government is implementing greater support for farmers mental wellbeing, Council is proposing to increase the financial burden and emotional stress load on hill country farms, the smallest and most vulnerable group contributing to the quality of our waterways.

I believe we need a plan that rewards individual efforts, a plan that does not allow dairy to buy credits or Maori to claim exemptions. A plan that takes into account urban and industrial contamination. We need a moderate, broad and fair plan. The currently proposed plan does not tick these boxes.

# MG & RM JOHNSTON

1165 Moerangi Road, RD1, Oparau 3885

### **3.11.3**

#### ***Stock Exclusion Rule***

##### **I Oppose**

The reasons for this are.

Implementing the proposed plan will over burden our debt load by adding to it the extra cost of fencing supplies, troughs and water systems, and will reduce our stock carrying capacity.

It is creating stress and uncertainty that is physiologically detrimental to farmers wellbeing.

It will have a negative financial effect on communities that rely on agricultural support in the rural areas.

##### **As an alternative I propose.**

That I would like the Waikato Regional Council to implement the National Water Accord which recommends streams 1.5 metres and wider be fenced off and protected.

#### ***Objective 1. And Policy 5***

I support and wish to amend.

I support the objective but with amendments.

I believe there is a need for a Water Resource Management Plan.

But it must be a sustainable plan, a plan that takes into account all parties contributing to the water quality of our lakes and rivers.

##### **As an alternative I propose.**

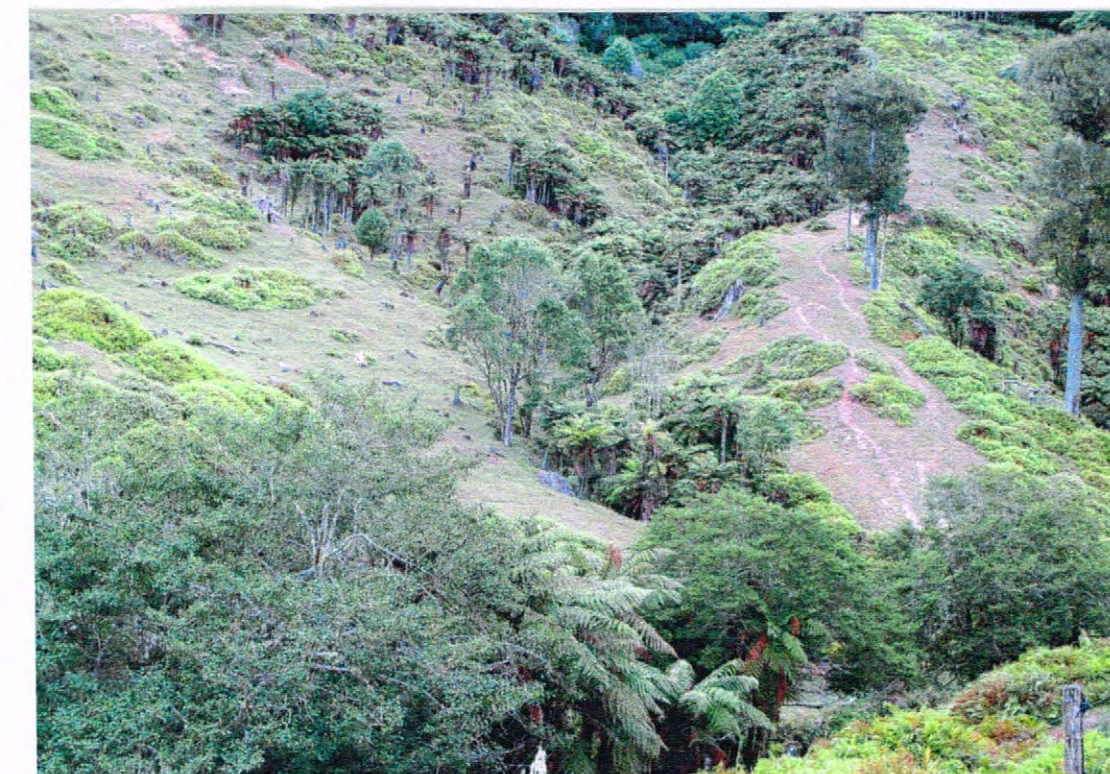
We need to clearly identify pollution areas, Urban, Industrial, Forestry, Farming. Test and rate them according to the amount of contamination they are causing.



① Native bush left on steep slopes



① Stock already have limited access to streams



② and in deep gullies



② due to fencing and natural terrain,



③ helps in preventing slips and soil erosion



③ grazing keeps stream banks clear and stream unobstructed reducing water contamination with the use of harmful sprays