



COR4118

Chair and Councillors of Greater Wellington Regional Council

CC: Nigel Corry, CEO, Greater Wellington Regional Council

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Dear Daran Ponter and Councillors

**Information request – Greater Wellington Regional Council intentions to provide for vegetable production when implementing the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM)**

Thank you for the recent Te Uru Kahika Progress Report on regional planning implementation of the NPS-FM. I am pleased to see you have notified the first change to your regional policy statement and are continuing to make steady progress towards notifying your plan and further changes to the regional policy statement no later than December 2024, despite the challenges outlined in the report.

Among other issues, this summer's extreme weather has highlighted the importance of a wide geographic distribution of fresh vegetable production so that New Zealanders can continue to access healthy food options at a reasonable cost. The resilience of our food system will no doubt continue to be tested as the effects of climate change gain severity.

There is uncertainty as to how plans currently in development under the NPS-FM will enable continuity for vegetable growing and expansion of the domestic supply in line with future growth of New Zealand's population. New Zealand's population is forecasted to grow 8% between 2023 and 2033.<sup>1</sup>

I am therefore requesting information on Greater Wellington Regional Council's intentions to provide for vegetable production in your region through your NPS-FM freshwater management planning instruments (land and water plans). Please include the rationale for your approach.

The information provided should include details about any mechanisms the Council is developing that enable:

- vegetable growers to practice crop rotation, moving their production (and associated discharges) from one property to another – for example allowing a grower to lease land in different properties within a freshwater management unit;

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<sup>1</sup> StatsNZ projections 2022 - 2073 - available at [https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/national-population-projections-2022base2073/#:~:text=New%20Zealand's%20population%20\(5.13%20million,and%205.85%20million%20in%202033.](https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/national-population-projections-2022base2073/#:~:text=New%20Zealand's%20population%20(5.13%20million,and%205.85%20million%20in%202033.)

- an expansion of the total area of production – noting this will almost certainly lead to an increase in Nitrogen-related discharges, and potentially other discharges, from new land brought into vegetable production.

I would like to keep the reporting burden to a minimum. My expectation is that the information will be brief, but specific enough to understand whether and how the Council is intending to provide for the matters outlined above.

I acknowledge that the first report date is too early in plan development for specific details on possible plan provisions and understand any proposals need to be thoroughly tested with your community. However, please respond with your intended approach on the basis of currently available knowledge. If the Council has any queries about what reporting is required, please contact Bryan Smith through email [bryan.smith@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:bryan.smith@mfe.govt.nz) or phone 027 5183327.

My request is in accordance with section 27 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). The first report is required by 19 May 2023, with reporting to continue on annual basis until 19 May 2025, with a view to capturing any further decisions and their rationale made in the intervening period. Officials will follow up with Council staff after reports are received should any clarification be needed.

I appreciate the sensitivities involved in this early phase of your regional freshwater management planning process. The information will not be shared beyond the cross-agency project team (Ministry for Environment and Ministry for Primary Industries officials), except where needed to meet statutory requirements, such as under the Official Information Act 1982.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Parker', is positioned below the text 'Yours sincerely'.

Hon David Parker  
**Minister for the Environment**