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Enquiries to: Dawn Pritchard



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Taupō District Council
Private Bag 2005
Taupō 3352

Private Bag 3038
Waikato Mail Centre
Hamilton 3240
New Zealand

waikatoregion.govt.nz
0800 800 401

Email: districtplan@taupo.govt.nz

Waikato Regional Council – Letter to be Tabled for Plan Change 43, Taupō Industrial Environments

To: Hearing Panel for Plan Change 43, Industrial Environment, Taupō District Council Proposed District Plan

Name of submitter: Waikato Regional Council

1. This is a letter to be tabled for the hearing on the Plan Change 43 – Taupō Industrial Land, Taupō District Council Proposed District Plan.
2. Waikato Regional Council (WRC) lodged a submission on Plan Change 43 (PC43) to the proposed Taupō District Plan. Through its submission WRC opposed the rezoning of the two sites proposed for rezoning: Site 4 – Broadlands Road West and Site 7 – Napier Road.
3. WRC opposed the rezoning on the basis of:
 - a) Concern in regard to the protection of Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) and Significant Geothermal Features (SGFs); and
 - b) Presence of geothermal hazards.
4. Since lodging the submission, WRC, through its agent, has had multiple conversations with Taupō District Council staff and has reviewed the S42A report including appended evidence. Following these further conversations and review, the purpose of this letter is to modify WRC's position on PC43 and to support the proposed PC43 as amended through the s42A report.

Significant Natural Areas and Significant Geothermal Features

5. WRC's submission opposed the zoning of Site 4 due to the potential for effects on SNAs and SGFs.
6. WRC is supportive of the further ecological assessment undertaken as part of PC43 and is supportive of the recommendations provided through the evidence of Mr Willie Shaw. Consequently, WRC supports the amendments to PC43 proposed through the s42A report – Attachment B.

Presence of geothermal hazards

7. WRC's submission opposed the zoning of Sites 4 and 7 based on the presence of geothermal hazards. WRC was concerned about the risks to human health that could be caused by development in hot ground areas.
8. WRC continues to consider the sites are at risk from geothermal hazards, however following further evaluation, considers that PC43 provides an appropriate consent regime for managing the potential effects of geothermal hazards on future industrial development.
9. Further discussions with Taupō District Council staff and review of the s42A report (including the evidence of Ms Phillips) have assisted in greater understanding of the provisions and required future investigation. WRC acknowledges and agrees in particular with paragraph 3.5 of Ms Phillips' evidence in relation to the risk to Site 4 from geothermal hazards and the requirement for future geotechnical investment.
10. In particular, WRC considers that proposed rule 4h3.7 and the requirement for deep geotechnical investigation is imperative to ensuring that future industrial development will not be impacted by geothermal hazards and/or appropriate means to mitigate the impact of hazards. WRC strongly supports the retention of this provision.

Minor referencing error

11. Through its submission WRC highlighted a minor referencing error to the legal description of a title within Site 4. The S42A report recommends accepting that submission point and WRC supports this recommendation.

Conclusion

12. WRC would like to modify its position in relation to PC43. WRC opposed the plan change based on concerns in regard to the protection of SNAs and SGFs, and the presence of geothermal hazards. Based on further consideration since lodging this submission, WRC is no longer in opposition to the proposed new zoning, and in addition supports the further amendments proposed through the S42A Report.
13. Given that WRC is in general support of the planners' recommendations, WRC does not consider it necessary to be heard at the hearing.
14. Should the hearings panel require clarification or wish to discuss the above matters further please contact WRC via the address for service below.

Please note that should the Section 42A author for Taupō District Council change their position or recommendations on the above, WRC's position outlined in this letter may be subject to change.

Should you have any queries regarding the content of this letter please contact Dawn Pritchard, Senior Policy Advisor, Policy Implementation on (07) 949 5153 or by email dawn.pritchard@waikatoregion.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisette Balsom', written in a cursive style.

Lisette Balsom
Manager, Strategic Policy Implementation

Address for Service:
Megan Kettle
GMD Consultants
1 Karl Michael Crescent
Flagstaff
Hamilton (3210)

Email: Megan@GMDconsultants.co.nz