

Online Submission

Freedom Camp: Responsible Freedom Camping Bylaw

Submitter

Title: Mr

First Name: Matt

Last Name: Newby

Could I gain an advantage in trade competition with this submission?: No

I/we generally support the proposed Responsible Freedom Camping Bylaw: No

The body of this submission have been uploaded from a file and the content of that file is in the following page(s)

Certified Self Containment,

General – I support the proposal to restrict freedom camping to certified self contained vehicles where there are no facilities. However, CSC only indicates the ability for the vehicle operator to camp responsibly, and provides no certainty the operator will. Regular oversight, with enforcement, of popular locations by council officers will still be required.

General comment(s) on the proposed Responsible Freedom Camping Bylaw:

I believe the bylaw is effectively a blanket ban on freedom camping across much of the district. There is little or no real basis behind many of the justifications provided, which would make the restrictions unlawful under the act. I believe without adequate justification, many of the restrictions are disproportionate to the problem described.

Remedy: Review the justifications for basis in fact. Review the restrictions to ensure they are compliant will Section 11.2.b for the Freedom camping Act “the bylaw is the most appropriate and proportionate way of addressing the perceived problem in relation to that area....”

Beach Coastal Areas –

The draft bylaw cites Health and safety risk due to tides and extreme weather events, yet there are a number of commercially operated camping ground along the coast. I fail to understand how the risk of extreme weather along the Kaikoura Coast, where campsites exist light up to the water’s edge, differs materially from the Hurunui. I fail to see what makes the Gore Bay camp ground immune to the same weather events that justify a blanket ban on coastal camping in the district.

Hurunui River Mouth uses the commercial arrangement of the lease of the reserve as justification for prohibiting Freedom camping – this is possibly unlawful.

Remedy: Review the baseless justifications and ensure the restrictions are required, appropriate and proportionate

Urban areas restrictions

The justification takes a few arguments that do not exist in all roads and applies them widely – e.g. “parking on road sides that are utilised by high volumes of traffic....”, yet A vast majority or urban roads do not have high volumes of traffic. Using Parking to justify the restriction across all urban areas is unjustifiable unless it can be shown to be a problem. Over all, the response to Prohibit Freedom camping fails the requirement under the act that they must be necessary. If sufficient designated sites

close to amenities and businesses were allocated then there would be no need for a blanket ban of urban areas.

Remedy: Review the baseless justifications and ensure the restrictions are required, appropriate and proportionate

Time restriction.

The bylaw does not identify how the time restriction applied to designated camping areas (between 8PM and 8AM) is justified. Further, the 8PM time frame falls after the normal bed time of children, it could be argued the restriction is discriminatory against families traveling with children, and is in breach of their human rights. In the least, it is unwelcoming and very family unfriendly.

The 8PM arrival time is after dark for much of the year. This means puts visitors, often unfamiliar with the areas, will be looking for the sites in the dark. There are potentially a number of safety issue with this, from driving around in the dark looking for a location, to setting up for the night. What happens if the limited allocated spaces at a location are full, and the driver needs to leave town to find a site for the night, on unfamiliar open roads, in the dark?

The extremely limited number of sites and 8PM arrival time combine to create significant potential for civil disruption as Freedom campers via for too few spots, all arriving at the same time. It is entirely foreseeable that people could drive dangerously, tempers become frayed and altercations possible.

Remedy: Review the baseless justifications and ensure the restrictions are required, appropriate and proportionate

“Destination Playground”

In the 26 October North Canterbury News, there was an article titled “Destination Playground” (Page 26) highlighting the Hurunui councils desire to entice visitors to stop and enjoy the offering of the local towns and businesses. This proposed FC bylaw is completely at odds with the published article. If the Hurunui wants motorists to stop, the council should not be preventing them staying the night. The number of designated FC are too few and too small, meaning visitors will need to drive around looking for sites. Further to this is the 8PM arrival and 8AM departure – Certainly family unfriendly times and likely to discourage visitors. If the council wants visitors to stop in the towns, it needs to make the options far more attractive then they currently are.

Remedy: Have a meeting and get everyone in the council to agree on a strategy (or if they cannot agree, at least be consistent in what the council communicates to the community) .