



Submission to the Health Committee – Water Services Bill

Introduction

1. The Hurunui District Council (HDC) thanks the Health Committee for the opportunity to submit on the Water Services Bill.
2. HDC supports the Canterbury Mayoral Forum submission and wishes to make the following points.
3. HDC wishes to appear in support of this submission, either in Christchurch or Wellington, in person or via audio or videoconference link. HDC will be represented by Mayor Marie Black.
4. The Hurunui district is in North Canterbury. We have approximately 12,558 residents and cover an area of 8,646 km² spanning from the east coast across to the Main Divide. The Hurunui district is predominantly rural land interspaced with small service towns. Our economy is primarily reliant on primary production and tourism.

Key Issues for consideration

5. The key matters of the Bill that HDC wishes to draw attention to are:
 - Definition of drinking water supply and the compliance requirements for small drinking water supplies
 - matters related to stock water systems that have some household connections
 - Irrigation suppliers
 - source water protection.

Definition of Drinking Water Supply

6. The Bill significantly increases the number and types of drinking water supplies that will fall under the provisions of the Bill, with the definition of a drinking water supplier enlarged to mean any person supplying drinking water other than a domestic self-supplier. This will capture farms that supply drinking water to farm worker houses on their farms. This seems onerous for properties that do not have access to a Council scheme, for example hill and high-country farms that have good quality water supplies that are upstream from contamination sources.

HDC recommends that the Bill make clear the requirements of small drinking water suppliers that were not covered in the Health Act.

Stock water systems with some household connections

7. HDC has concerns about how the definition of drinking water supplier may impact on private or Council-operated reticulated stock water schemes. Such schemes were incepted to supply water for stock; however, in practice once a supply enters a property, it is impossible for those operators to regulate what use is made of the water supplied. A property may use the water for their household and in so doing potentially change the entire status of the supply.

HDC recommends that the Bill make clear how an operator of a reticulated stock water scheme can satisfactorily demonstrate to the regulator that they are not considered a drinking water supplier

Irrigation water supplier

8. HDC has concerns that an irrigation water supplier that supplies water to a drinking water supplier as part of its water network will also be defined as a drinking water supplier and must comply with the drinking water supplier requirements.

HDC recommends that the Bill makes clear the requirements for irrigation suppliers supplying water to drinking water suppliers.

Source Water protection

9. HDC is concerned about the heavy focus in the bill of source protection and that the Bill should recognise that in some instances treatment may be the most efficient method.
10. With surface water takes, source protection is often difficult and if land uses within specified distances need to be controlled, water supply will become increasingly costly with productive land having to be retired from production.
11. HDC considers there needs to be a more integrated approach to land and water management. Pressures to supply land for urban growth, to protect land for food production and supply drinking water, often create competing demands that Councils must manage.

Marie A Black.

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