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Bob Laing  
Waikato Regional Council  
PO Box 4010  
Hamilton East  
HAMILTON 3247

9<sup>th</sup> November 2012

### **Request for accurate monitoring of the Whangamata ebb tidal delta**

Dear Mr Laing,

On the 23rd of October our society (SPS) sent a letter to your council's Senior Resource Officer at the Coastal Resource Use Group, Christin Atchinson.

The letter was regarding the recent decision by WRC to review the consents for dredging and deposition of spoil at Whangamata, and an earlier email Ms Christin had sent our society inviting SPS to contribute any further science we may have to assist the review.

We believe the review of these consents has been generated because of concerns highlighted in our society's report, supported by both the Hauraki Gulf Forum and the Environmental Defence Society regarding observed deteriorating surfing wave quality at the Whangamata ebb tidal delta, the Whangamata Bar.

Our letter in October to your senior consents officer was cc to you and others, and again, as outlined in our report, defined what science would be best utilised to determine if the dredging is impacting on wave quality at the Whangamata Bar, an international surfing venue.

In July we sent you a copy of the Whangamata Bar Report, a letter regarding consultation undertaken between our society and the Environmental Defence Society requesting the current review of the consents, and a memorandum from EDS that outlined legal options available to SPS, as well as an offer by EDS to host a workshop to seek positive outcomes for the Whangamata Bar.

The Whangamata Bar is an outstanding landscape feature, and is mentioned by name in the 2010 New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

Our society holds numerous correspondences with your council dating back to 2007 concerning what is needed to monitor the Whangamata Bar in relation to the construction of the marina.

Our October letter had attached a description of the methodology to be applied and a cost estimate from eCoast Ltd. All coastal processes scientists involved so far agree that camera monitoring is needed at the Whangamata Bar.

On Tuesday the 30<sup>th</sup> of October we received a brief email from Christin thanking SPS for our inquiry, (our October letter) and stating that :

*“I have enquired with the Resource Information Group of WRC regarding your request for funding a Coast-Cam for the Whangamata Bar as part of environmental monitoring.*

*Unfortunately there is currently no budget allocated for funding your camera monitoring system. You may wish to request funding for this as part of our annual planning process.”*

Our letter to Christin had clearly pointed out that the review and Bar monitoring costs are recoverable from the consent holder.

This fact is noted in the consent no's 121398 and 121399 conditions, stated on their respective pages 4:

*Note: Costs associated with any review of the conditions of this resource consent will be recovered from the consent holder in accordance with the provisions of section 36 of the Resource Management Act 1991.*

The cost of monitoring the bar was placed on the consent holder with the original marina consents when granted by the Crown in 2006 (coastal permit application no 953758 condition 10.vii ) stating that for condition 10 : *“The consent holder shall retain appropriately qualified and experienced persons “*

The Surfbreak Protection Society fail to understand why The marina society supported by WRC would prefer the more expensive option of detailed Bathymetric surveys of the Chanel and Bar before and after a dredging event that while illustrates physical changes to the Ebb tidal delta, will not demonstrate any changes to surfing wave quality.

It is the surfing wave quality that draws tourists both nationally and internationally to the small town of Whangamata, and a vital source of tourist income for the town.

The camera monitoring system prescribed by eCoast Ltd **will** be able to demonstrate any effects on wave quality that may or may not coincide with any dredging activities.

When releasing the marina consents, Environment Minister David Benson – Pope stated to one of our member's in a letter (mentioned in the report and attached) that:

*“ I specifically asked the Environment Court about the surfing issue”....”In response to your questions condition 10 of the coastal permit granted to the Whangamata Marina Society Incorporated includes that the consent holder shall retain appropriately qualified and experienced persons to develop a plan to monitor the sand bar at the harbour entrance to ascertain if the dredging and construction has any long term effects”.... “the costs of meeting this condition fall on the society.”*

With the above taken into account, and Ms Atchinson's email, the Surfbreak Protection Society does not understand why the Waikato Regional Council now seems to think that the responsibility for costs now rests with the ratepayers and the limited budget of your council?

Our Society also believes that none of the professionals so far engaged by the Whangamata Marina Society Incorporated to meet condition 10.vii of the consent, are qualified to measure changes in surfing wave quality.

SPS therefore request that WRC direct the marina Society to engage appropriately qualified and experienced persons to meet condition 10.vii of the consent.

As far as our society understands eCoast Ltd are the most appropriately qualified and experienced persons to direct a review of the dredging consents, regarding any effects these activities may be having on the surfing issue at the Whangamata ebb tidal delta.

SPS would appreciate answers to the following questions:

1. Do you agree that costs of monitoring of possible adverse effects on wave quality at the Whangamata Bar rest with the Whangamata Marina Society?

2. Is the review of consents 121398 and 121399 being undertaken because of concerns raised about possible adverse effects on surfing wave quality at the Whangamata Bar generated from the SPS report, our society's July letter, and the memorandum from EDS?

3. If your organisation has undertaken a review of the consents on the strength of our society's report and consultation with EDS, why would the council not employ the very science that our report recommends?

4. The Surfbreak Protection Society would appreciate a response from you as to why your council would impose a costly review of the granted consents on the marina society, when the limited science method employed is so clearly unable to measure cause *and effects* on wave quality at the Whangamata Bar?

5. Would you agree to an open and transparent meeting without prejudice, with representatives of your organisation, the marina society's, EDS and our own, as soon as is practicable to discuss our concerns?

Kind Regards

Paul Shanks  
President  
Surfbreak Protection Society Incorporated.

**Cc John Tregidga, Gary Taylor, Tim Higham**