

MEMBER ADVISORY

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Submission to Western Bay of Plenty - Transmission Buffer Zones opposed

All Western Bay of Plenty members

Federated Farmers has lodged a submission to Plan Changes 1-27 to the Western Bay of Plenty District Plan. The Council released all 27 plan changes at once to tidy up many different areas of the District Plan.

Of main concern was that the new rules have the potential to accidentally capture normal farming activities, and that the ability to farm in the rural zone was being slowly eroded away by unnecessary regulation.

Transmission Buffer Zones

The Plan Changes sought to have a new Transmission Buffer Zone around up to 32 metres either side of electricity transmission lines, this was initiated by Transpower. New rules for earthworks, buildings and subdivision within the Transmission Buffer Zone were also included.

Federated Farmers strongly opposed Transmission Buffer Zones, and expressed great concern that Transpower is trying to restrict activities through the District Plan, rather than negotiating easement agreements with individual land owners. What is more concerning is that the RMA says that there will be no compensation paid when land owners are affected by rules in a District Plan.

The rules for buildings within the Transmission Buffer Zone meant that even deer fences, and water tanks would need resource consent. Federated Farmers submitted that rules intending to stop large scale and tall buildings near lines need to avoid capturing farm structures. Likewise the subdivision rule would also capture subdivision of a farm into two farms with house sites many kilometres away from the line itself.

Federated Farmers urged the Council to remember that transmission lines occur over productive rural land, and use of the land to transmit electricity should not limit the capability of the land to be used for primary production by the very people that own it.

Rural Contractor Depots

Federated Farmers strongly supported the permitted status of Rural Contractors Depots as this meant that the Council acknowledges that rural contractors are vital to the agricultural and horticultural industries of the Western Bay of Plenty.

The rule stated that only 3 people were allowed to work in the Depot, Federated Farmers submitted that this was too low.

Earthworks in Floodable Areas

A rule requiring earthworks over 5m³ to get resource consent in floodable areas was opposed. Federated Farmers submitted that the rule would mean Council would be processing ridiculous resource consents for activities like clean filling around troughs which will have no affect on flooding. Most areas that are mapped as floodable are rural, and earthworks are vital for farming to continue.

Federated Farmers reminded the Council that it does not want to create the situation where farming can no longer continue due to flood hazard regulation, so that landowners might as well change land use to rural-residential or lifestyle as houses will be permitted whereas farming earthworks will not be.

Fences and Planting in Viewshafts

Federated Farmers opposed a rule that required fences and planting to obtain resource consent where these occur in Viewshafts. Once again the rules will capture activities that have no effect on views, and will restrain farmer's use of their own land for primary production.

Planting of vegetation could mean that re-sowing pasture or seasonal cropping would need resource consent. Federated Farmers reminded the Council that the purpose of the rural zone is primary production, and not simply a scenic outlook.

To read Federated Farmers full submission [click here](#).

For more information, please contact,

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