

Submission from Clint Deckard

NFL-P5

To recognise the regional social and economic significance of water storage within ONF-4 (Mākāroro Gorge).

I oppose the inclusion of this policy as it is predicated on a lie.

The social and economic significance of water storage in this area was contentious and contested; even the Board of Inquiry sounded a note of caution about the claims of social and economic benefits.

From the BOI final report:

“[1021] In the Board’s view there must be an element of conjecture about whether the predicted social effects arising from the development of the RWSS will occur. “

“[1023] On that basis the Board concludes that there will be both positive and negative social effects if the RWSS is implemented. Mitigation mechanisms should enable the community to plan for and benefit from the scheme.”

I applaud the effort in developing the District plan but found the inclusion of NFL-P5 to be jarring and dissonant. Where did this come from? Who’s idea was this? And what is its purpose? Why include a policy about a failed infrastructure project?

I think it was the then editor of the Hawke’s Bay Today, Andrew Austin, that noted “what sank the Ruataniwha Dam was when the accountants of Napier held their nose and voted for a Green candidate to the HBRC” to turn the numbers against the dam. They knew very well that the figures just didn’t stack up.

The revised figures, funded by the power consumers of Centralines, are even worse. The size of the public subsidy has exploded, the cost of water has increased and we are presented with the perverse situation where ratepayers are expected to pay 30cents a cubic metre for water for ‘the health of the river’ only to be extracted a few kilometres down stream for zero cents a cubic metre by a large dairy operation.

I note that the Tukituki Water Security Project’s expert advisors are Tucker Lewis, self described ‘boutique investment bankers’. There is no mention of who their environmental advisors are.

There is a cost to the continued dangling of the Ruataniwha carrot; we are failing to address our real issues around how wise our water use is now. I have no doubt we have some hard conversations to come about how we currently use water and the value we place on this dwindling resource.

The sooner the prospect of the Ruataniwha Dam becomes a part of history the sooner we can address the clear and present problems we have with the current allocation system.

New Zealand’s highest court confirmed that land required for the dam could not legally be obtained. No feasible path around this fatal obstacle has been provided. It is time to consign the dam to history seriously plan for the future.

To include NFL-P5 would diminish the Plan as a whole and I urge you to remove it.