

Proposed Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan

Wellington | December 2023

What is Proposed Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan?

Proposed Change 1 (PC1) introduces freshwater rules for the Te Awarua-o-Porirua and Te Whanganui-a-Tara whaitua (catchments). Though these catchments do not currently contain much horticulture, HortNZ felt it was important to submit in case provisions from more urban areas are carried over to the region's rural areas in future policy changes.



Key changes /provisions

HortNZ is concerned that proposed rules restricting rural land use change from less intensive to more intensive land uses would make crop rotation impossible, which is an essential horticultural management practice for soil health and reducing disease pressure. This is because many rotations include pasture, which is a less intensive land use than commercial vegetable production. We also assert that growers should have the flexibility to change land use from perennial fruit growing to short-rotation cropping as they see fit.

Summary of HortNZ submission

Notified Provisions	Summary of HortNZ's submission
Policy WH.P22/P.P21 Capping, minimising and reducing diffuse discharges of nitrogen from farming activities	The method of capping nitrogen discharges from individual properties is not supported. Mitigations should be prioritised based on overall contaminant levels at the freshwater management unit or sub-catchment scale.
Policy WH.P25/P.P24 Managing rural land use change	HortNZ strongly opposes this policy, which states that resource consent can only be granted for a land use change from a less intensive to a more intensive rural land use if nutrient discharge will

	stay the same or decrease (effectively preventing change from pasture or orcharding to vegetable production).
Rule WH.R27/P.R26 Farming activities on 20 hectares or more of land - permitted activity	HortNZ supports a permitted activity status for horticulture with a requirement for a farm environment plan for activities over 5 ha.
Rule WH.R31/P.R28 Change of rural land use - discretionary activity	HortNZ strongly opposes this rule, which makes a change from orcharding or pasture to vegetable growing a discretionary activity, which means that the council has full discretion whether or not to grant a resource consent with any conditions.
Rule P.R31 Take and use of water - restricted discretionary activity	HortNZ supports efficiency of water use as a matter of discretion for water allocation. Horticulture is an efficient use of water.

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [Greater Wellington Regional Council website](#)
- Keep an eye on [HortNZ's website](#)
- HortNZ contact: Emily Levenson, Environmental Policy Advisor (emily.levenson@hortnz.co.nz)