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Mark Buttimore



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The Governance and Administration Committee
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

**SUBMISSION ON THE THAMES-COROMANDEL DISTRICT COUNCIL AND HAUARKI
DISTRICT COUNCIL MANGROVE MANAGEMENT BILL**

The Hauraki District Council has prepared the attached submission for the consideration of the Governance and Administration Committee.

The Council wishes to appear before the Committee to speak to its submission.

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John Tregidga MNZM, JP
Mayor
Hauraki District Council

Submission from the Hauraki District Council on the Thames-Coromandel District Council Hauraki District Council Mangrove Management Bill

The address for service is:

John Tregidga MNZM, JP - Mayor
John.tregidga@hauraki-dc.govt.nz
07-862-5020
021-248-0227

Mark Buttimore
Strategic Planning Projects Manager
mark.buttimore@hauraki-dc.govt.nz
07-862-5030
021-851-970

The Hauraki District Council (HDC) in conjunction with the Thames-Coromandel District Council (TCDC), fully supports the intent of the Bill and its clauses in their entirety for the following reasons:

- The current mangrove management regime is not working: it is confusing, time-consuming, costly, and divisive and has left damaged relationships between communities and the regional authority.
- A different approach is required.
- It is the Council's view that a community driven process based on consensus is the answer to managing mangroves such that a balance is achieved that recognises all important harbour and estuarine ecological, amenity and recreational values.
- This Bill provides that community driven process based on community empowerment, whereby it seeks to empower local communities, assisted by their councils, to achieve balanced outcomes for their harbour environments.

The Council wishes to make the following general comments:

- The coastal communities of both HDC and TCDC, have become increasingly concerned at the spread of mangroves within their respective harbours, estuaries and within the Firth of Thames.
- Mangrove incursion since the 1950s or later has resulted in a loss of access and recreational opportunities and a diminution of harbour and estuarine values including:
 - Visual amenity;
 - Natural character impacting iconic coastal landscapes and seascapes;
 - Ecological values with diverse ecosystems being gradually replaced with a monoculture;
 - Loss of shorebird feeding habitat at the internationally significant Firth of Thames Ramsar tidal wetland.
- It is acknowledged that mangroves do have a place in the Firth of Thames and harbour and estuarine environments but not at the expense of all other values. The councils, on behalf of their communities, seek a balance in this regard that is based on community engagement.

- Within the Hauraki District there is growing community concern at the spread of mangroves within the Firth of Thames Ramsar site - an 8500 hectare wetland of international significance. The site includes shallow estuarine water and mudflats, shell banks, grass flats, mangrove forest, saltmarsh and freshwater swamp margins. Classified as an internationally important coastal wetland under the Ramsar Convention in 1990, the site is part of the East Asian–Australasian Shorebird Site Network.
- Twenty-four species of wader and 60 bird species have been recorded here, and there can be up to 40,000 migratory birds within the Firth at particular times of the year. The extensive shell banks, between Miranda and Kaiaua, are an example of a Chenier plain, a unique landform rare globally. These provide sheltered roost sites when the tide is too high for waders to feed.
- The expansion of mangroves into the southern and western Firth will lead to increasing pressure for space between the mangroves and the other significant habitats at this site. There is concern that the continued spread of mangroves will result in environmental imbalance leading to habitat alteration, the displacement of species and ultimately, reduced biodiversity.
- The cost of resource consent and administrative processes associated with managing mangrove incursions is a key driver of community concern with the current process. Within the greater Thames Valley area there is a high level of awareness around some of the costs that have been incurred by the councils and communities (most notably the Whangamata community) going through resource management processes to authorise mangrove management and removal.
- It is understandable then, that the councils' preference is to see the limited financial resources available within the community, particularly the resources available to the councils, more effectively and efficiently utilised in the provision of core infrastructure and services, such as waste water treatment plants and catchment sediment management schemes to further protect estuarine and harbour environments.
- In short, the existing mangrove management regime under the Resource Management Act 1991 has been confusing, costly, time-consuming, and divisive and has not delivered desirable outcomes.
- An unfortunate outcome in the latter regard of the process to date is the relationship between local concerned communities and their regional council. It is the Council's wish that the mechanisms that this bill seeks to establish will go some way toward mending community and regional council relationships.
- This Local Bill is an opportunity to truly embrace the community empowerment model, and to fully support the trust placed in communities to manage by consensus at a local level.

The Hauraki District Council thanks the Committee for the opportunity to present its submission and respectfully ask that the select committee consider a hearing/s be held in Thames to accommodate the many local people who may make submissions.