



Office of Hon Simon Bridges

MP for Tauranga

Minister for Economic Development

Minister of Transport

Minister for Communications

Leader of the House

Associate Minister of Finance

17 JUL 2017

Lyn Mayes
Chair – Auckland Conservation Board
Private Bag 68908
Newton
Auckland 1145

Dear Lyn

Thank you for your letter of 16 June 2017 regarding the Auckland Conservation Board's concern of a potential large oil leak from the wreck of the **Niagara** located off the coast of Northland in the Hauraki Gulf. The risk of an oil spill is an issue the Government takes very seriously, particularly in areas where there is high marine biodiversity.

I am advised that both regional councils concerned and the responsible central government agencies, including Maritime NZ, are aware of the **Niagara** wreck and its potential risks.

Maritime NZ and the Northern Regional Council have undertaken assessments of the risks posed by the wreck and observed that, when small leaks have occurred, the oil has naturally dispersed or broken up with no observed environmental impact. Maritime NZ advises that, due to the depth of the wreck and the type of oil on board (a heavy marine fuel type with a high pour point), it is likely the oil is in a near solid form for much of the time and, as the oil is likely distributed over a number of spaces and compartments of the wreck, a major leak is unlikely.

Regardless, contingency plans have been developed that collectively cover the risks and response plans for an oil spill from any source in the Hauraki Gulf, including the **Niagara** wreck.

My officials have spoken with Maritime NZ and I am satisfied with the contingency plans in place. I have asked Maritime NZ to keep me informed if the situation changes.

Yours sincerely



Hon Simon Bridges
Minister of Transport