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Sent: Friday, 17 May 2024 8:50 pm
To: haveyoursay
Subject: LTP 2024-2034 Differential Forest Roding Rates

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17 May 2024

To Waitomo District Council Long Term Plan 2024-2034

Submission on Introducing a targeted or differential rate on the District Roding Rate

Submitted by Murray Downs on Behalf of Waikato Farm Forestry Association

We have some 10-12 members that identify with Waitomo District, of the 77 current "Waikato" members. Some of them have a non Waitomo address where they live, so can be hard to identify.

We will outline the basis of our submission, noting that we will include more depth when we come to make a verbal submission (on the 28 May 2024 we understand), and also **when we obtain details of the basis and actual calculation of the estimated forest roding costs that Waitomo District CEO Ben Smit has promised this afternoon, that he will send, as the only staff member authorised to speak to enquiries on this matter.**

We affirm that trees are correctly NOT included in capital values.

We affirm that metal roads such as Mapara South Road, with large forest properties at the end of the road do create problems with road damage during the harvest period of a forest cycle.

This can be offset to some extent by positive other values.

- Increased biodiversity, in both plant life and animal life. Many native birds do very well in pine forests.

-Erosion protection

-Water quality improvements – no fertiliser use.

-Minimal to nil use of many other General rate services

There are many variations to a standard radiata exotic forest that make the imposition of the roding rates very distorted including:

- 100% Carbon forests – never any intention to harvest the forest
- Special purpose species, many of which have much lower volumes recovered and a wait for 35- 50 years before ready
- Conservation plantings like poplar, or shelterbelts for timber.
- Sustainably managed forests – continual selective harvesting, low quantity, done annually.
- Some forests can be harvested at anytime from 20-25 years of age, depending on management.

With qualifications, we favour use of option 2, **BUT**:

-emphasise the need for rating calculations to take into account the expected/surveyed annual district harvest date, and thus the age of the trees. There has been a large number 1990's radiata plantings but many factors affect the harvest time decision, and it has been much more spread out than the years of planting suggested. Keeping an annual data base

of planting years and surveying harvest intentions are important proactive council considerations when striking a forest roading rate.

And note three other options should be acted upon.

1. Let responsible forest harvest managers (engaged by the rate payer) look after the council road, particularly metal ones, as they usually have expert experience in this field.
2. Recommend that rather than the council differentially rating, COUNCILS support the existing forest growers levy system, and promote all councils unitedly vote to support a forest levy rate on all tonnage harvested eg 12c /tonne paid to the council, perhaps with the harvest manager getting first go at claiming refunds for looking after council road as per 1 above?
3. Councils and Central Government try to reduce their roading bureaucracy, and be efficient and commercially responsive and understanding of their forest customers/rate payers, rather than standard process "tick box" service.

1-3 above comes from discussions with one of the most forest roading experienced and involved commercial forester, also on the NZ Forest Owners board, Marcus Musson, of Forest 360. Phone number available on request.

Thank you for being able to submit. Please allocate us some extra time to be able to present this verbally on the 28 May 2024 with further supportive info. And to answer questions.

Murray W Downs

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