

Press Release, for immediate release 23 April 2026

SAVING THE RANGES... AGAIN!

"I never believed we would have to save the Waitākere Ranges all over again" said Sir Bob Harvey at a packed public meeting in Henderson this weekend. Everyone in the room agreed that the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 was expected to protect the nationally significant area forever, but the Government's proposed legislation to replace the Resource Management Act could undo all those protections by not updating references within the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act to the new legislation or referring to the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act in the new legislation.

It's not only the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act that is at risk here. The Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act's protections for Auckland's precious Gulf has also had references to and from it omitted from the proposed new legislation. Speaking at the event Gary Taylor from the Environmental Defence Society said that *"minor changes linking these Acts to the new bills would be enough to ensure their protections continue into the future"*.

In addition, the proposed "regulatory relief" requiring councils to compensate landowners for imposing any rules restricting activities they want to do on their property will cause chaos for plans and impose a freeze on controlling the future use of private land. When the land you live on is locally, regionally and nationally significant in terms of its landscape, ecosystems, heritage and the culture of its communities this would destroy all of that. These Bills will bring back the "death by a thousand cuts" that these protective laws were meant to prevent for this special area, opening it up to a developers land grab that will rob the people of Auckland of their greatest asset, while making money for the few.

We all know how fragile the ecosystems of the Gulf and the Waitākere Ranges are - and how important they are to all Aucklanders, as well as the locals lucky enough to live there. The value placed by Aucklanders on the recreation opportunities provided by having the Gulf and the Ranges on their doorstep is extremely high. Polling done in 2007 showed support from 81% of Aucklanders for protecting the Waitākere Ranges. If anything, with the pressure of a growing Auckland and the dangers of climate change becoming more apparent, they have become more precious and important to the liveability of our largest city.

The communities of West Auckland, Te Kawerau ā Maki, Sir Bob Harvey, the Environmental Defence Society, the Waitākere Ranges Protection Society, Forest & Bird, The Tree Council,

and the Waitākere Ranges Local Board call on the Government to amend the proposed legislation and implement the following bullet points:

1. Insert links & references to and from the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008
2. Remove regulatory relief mechanism and replace with Section 85 of RMA 1991
3. Insert links & references to and from the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000

The public is encouraged to contact Minister Chris Bishop and Simon Court MP and others to request them to implement these essential amendments to the proposed legislation. This can most easily be done via the Forest & Bird website - [here](#).

Comment:

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