



To who it may concern

14 April 2022

LETTER OF SUPPORT – TE WHĀNAU-Ā-APANUI PROPOSAL FOR A RESOURCE CONSENT FOR 5,000 HA OF SEAWATER SPACE

Fifteen years ago, the Bay of Plenty had little more than a fledgling aquaculture industry, but it was a mine of untapped potential. Recognising the growth opportunities, the original Bay of Connections Regional Aquaculture Organisation was established in 2010, following an ambitious aquaculture strategy developed the year before. This signalled the Bay of Plenty putting its stake in the ground and committing to the development of the industry in the region, with a core focus on creating future opportunities and new jobs. Since then, the region has grown significantly and is well on its way to becoming a world-class aquaculture centre, attracting top academic talent, established operations and numerous opportunities. We are deeply committed to this kaupapa. With this in mind, we support this consent for two reasons.

First, we believe this is an education opportunity and pathway to employment for many who seek connection with the moana – in one form or another. Waikato University's commitment to aquaculture research and development cannot be under-estimated. We have already identified opportunities, issues, and solutions relevant to the New Zealand aquaculture industry and its "Blue Economy", including the need to create diverse aquaculture projects that are both profitable and ecologically sustainable. This resource consent heralds an additional commercial imperative underpinning this same endeavour, one which we will develop in partnership with Te Whānau-ā-Apanui – with their blessing.

Moreover, as an aquaculture research centre, the University of Waikato in Tauranga also provides access to the University's well-equipped laboratories – including the Coastal Marine Field Station and a dedicated research platform for seaweed cultivation, the Facility for Aquaculture Research of Macroalgae (FARM). Our education programmes in aquaculture find employment for our students in a range of primary industries (particularly marine and coastal-based activities), and future employers include the aquaculture and marine bioproduct industry, local and national government bodies (such as the Department of Conservation and Regional Councils) and Crown Research Institutes (such as NIWA, AgResearch and Plant & Food Research). These more recent investments by Iwi in the Eastern Bay of Plenty mean our students can and will also find places in commercial aquaculture activities, in their rohe, building a sustainable aquaculture economy many seek.

Second, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui and other Eastern Bay Iwi are seeking to find innovative ways to develop their aquaculture industry. Pushing the boundaries of current conventions where science, commerce, sustainable environmental practices, and regulation can sit comfortably at the same table. Te Whānau-ā-Apanui are tangata moana, our discussions with them clearly demonstrate a deep cultural connection with their moana, and, a desire to support a different approach to learning, working, earning through time. They describe how their kawa and tikanga is deeply bound to their relationship and contract with Tangaroa. We support them in this endeavour and challenge others, with more contemporary aspirations to do the same.

Te Whānau-ā-Apanui already understand the nature of systems and ecosystems. They are also keen to pursue an agile adaptive aquaculture management planning approach in their consent to

developing their aquaculture activities, with others, based on a developing knowledge base we can all participate in. We have been asked to support them with this innovation. We will do that in any way we can. The universities and science fraternity more generally applaud this approach over what has been, a very constrained, siloed, and haphazard endeavour to date. We can see the prospects for education, research and development to support Te Whānau-ā-Apanui and other aquaculture activities in Aotearoa New Zealand more generally to be substantial and fundamental to the sustainable future growth of our blue economy.

Understanding the shifting global circumstances of global warming, seawater acidification and the consequences on our marine environment require a similar approach as being suggested by Te Whānau-ā-Apanui. Supporting this consent, their endeavours, and a learning heuristic with others must be the way we approach all aquaculture opportunities of this nature in the future.

If you have any questions or would like any further information in support of this application, please do not hesitate to contact me on 027 445 5908.

Nāku noa, nā,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'C N Battershill'.

Chris Battershill

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