



Auckland Regional Council

21 Pitt Street Auckland New Zealand Private Bag 92 012 Auckland
Telephone 09 366 2000 Facsimile 09 366 2115 www.arc.govt.nz

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

1 May 2008

Hon Jim Anderton
Minister of Fisheries
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

File Ref: C704-09

Dear Jim

Thank you for your letter dated 22 April 2008 regarding the Auckland Regional Council's indicative excluded areas and draft policy framework on aquaculture

I wish to point out that the Auckland Regional Council is not proposing a "blanket ban" on new aquaculture with its draft policy framework and it is unfair and misleading for you to assert this – especially via press releases.

Our indicative excluded areas apply to half of Auckland's approximately 1.1 million hectare coastal marine area (CMA). This leaves around 522,000 hectares (47%) potentially available to Invited Private Plan Change (IPPC) applications for new aquaculture space, not counting sea space for existing farms. Though this is not our preference most of the remaining coastal marine area within excluded areas would also be available to conventional Private Plan Change (PPC) applications to create new aquaculture space.

Large scale aquaculture ventures close to the coastline are not supported by our proposed policy direction, but this does not preclude such applications being made further off-shore. I note that offshore applications are being made in other parts of the country, in particular, in Hawkes Bay, Canterbury and the Bay of Plenty.

Within the broadly precautionary direction of our policy framework, we aim to provide sufficient flexibility to allow for a range of possible small-scale aquaculture ventures either inside or outside the excluded areas. These might include innovative and experimental trials, high yield ventures, non-commercial customary farms, and localised expansion of existing farms.

The government is encouraging the best and most efficient use of limited aquaculture space. This is also one of the principles that under-pins our policy direction and our proposed support for some types of aquaculture. In your letter (15 March 2007) following our meeting here in Auckland, you supported this approach by stating, "development of the aquaculture

industry is not just about more new aquaculture space, it must also be about using the space we have to best effect.”

We also recognise that at least some of the demand for future aquaculture might be satisfied by innovative development of on-shore facilities, such as paua farms. I am surprised that according to management of OceanNZ Blue, the Paua farm at Marsden Point, no senior politician or official has inspected this facility which is taking a technically innovative and commercially successful approach to marine farming.

The ARC therefore has formulated aquaculture policies to stimulate discussion and fresh thinking on aquaculture methods and technologies. This way we can best help fulfil the exciting possibilities that aquaculture offers in a sustainable, smart way that best fits this region.

We clearly both agree on the intense competing demands on the Auckland region's coastal area which are only likely to increase as the population grows.

While we acknowledge the potential benefits of aquaculture regionally, nationally and globally, we recognise that it (particularly large scale farming) could have adverse effects on one of this regions' greatest assets; its coastal waters. We have responsibility under the aquaculture law reforms to take great care of this precious asset and we consider that the position we have put up for consultation appropriately reflects a fair balance of interests.

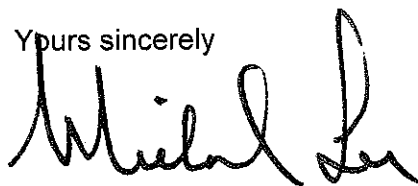
As someone born and raised in Auckland you would be aware of the huge value ordinary Aucklanders place on the Hauraki Gulf, in terms of recreation, tourism and conservation. Those values of course were formally recognised for protection by the Labour/Alliance Coalition Government when it enacted the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000. You would be aware that recreational boating alone supports economic activity of considerable importance to this country and in terms of boat building and sailing technology has made New Zealand one of the leading countries in the world (as New Zealand's and New Zealanders' on-going and pervasive influence in the America's Cup competition demonstrates).

It is also important to understand that our indicative excluded areas and proposed policy direction have been released for early consultation purposes, and are a starting point for discussion as we continue through the required RMA plan change processes.

We are confident our approach will ultimately establish a regional policy framework that will provide for sustainable aquaculture in Auckland.

We look forward to fulfilling our regional role, and in turn assisting the government to implement a successful, well managed and sustainable aquaculture industry for New Zealand.

Yours sincerely



Michael Lee
Chairman, Auckland Regional Council

c c Prime Minister the Hon Helen Clark
Hon Steve Chadwick, Minister of Conservation