

## Inventory for Updates to Regional Water and Soil Plan for Northland

There are 9 new pages that are to be inserted into the RWSP as follows:

Page No.	Remove	Replace With	Add
Approval page			Approval page at beginning of Plan, after approval of Plan Change 2 page, before page i
49 / 50	Page 49/50 – section 7	New page 49/50 provided – section 7	
58a			New page 58a after existing page 58 – section 7
65 / 66	Page 65/66 – section 8	New page 65/66 – section 8	
79 / 80	Page 79/80 – section 8	New page 79/80 – section 8	
83 / 84	Page 83/84 – section 9	New page 83/84 – section 9	
100a			New page 100a after existing page 100 – section 9
103 / 104	Page 103/104 – section 10	New page 103/104 – section 10	
111 / 112	Page 111/112 – section 10	New page 111/112 – section 10	

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991

# APPROVAL OF INSERTION OF TRANSITIONAL POLICIES

The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011 came into effect on the 1 July 2011, and required two new transitional policies (A4 and B7) to be inserted into the Water and Soil Plan to guide resource consent decision-making in relation to freshwater resources.

These amendments to the Regional Water and Soil Plan were made under section 55 of the Resource Management Act 1991 as directed by the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011. Section 55 of the Resource Management Act 1991 states that the amendments are to be made without using the public submission process provided in Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991.

The amendments were publically notified on the 5 October 2011 and inserted into the plan at pages 58a, 80, 100a, and 112 in accordance with the council resolutions of 20 September 2011.



General Manager - Planning and Policy

## 7.5 POLICIES (NB ADDITIONAL TRANSITIONAL POLICY ON PAGE 58A)

1. Where the existing water quality of lakes, rivers and streams is the same or higher than the water quality which is suitable for aquatic ecosystems, contact recreation, water supply, aesthetic or cultural purposes, to ensure that the water quality shall not be allowed to be reduced, unless it is consistent with the purpose of the Act to do so.

**Explanation:** *This policy signals the Council's general intent to exercise its land use, water abstraction and discharge control functions in a manner which at least ensures that existing water quality is not degraded. However, it is acknowledged that there may be circumstances in which it is appropriate that some adverse effects be accepted, for example, where beneficial social, cultural or economic effects outweigh adverse effects on water quality. This is consistent with s.69(3) of the Act and will be given effect through the development of catchment management plans.*

2. Having regard to Policy 7.05.01, the Council will identify specific natural water bodies or parts of natural water bodies within the Northland region to be managed for some of the following purposes as may be appropriate: aquatic ecosystems, contact recreation, water supplies, aesthetic and cultural values.

**Explanation:** *The policy is aimed at achieving Objective 7.04.01. It amounts to a statement of intent by the Council to prepare a comprehensive classification of Northland's freshwater bodies, once adequate investigations have been undertaken. This will be given effect through the development of catchment management plans. Methods 7.06.03 to 7.06.06 specify how the Council will implement the policy.*

3. Until such time as the classification system referred to in Policy 7.05.02 is introduced, when processing applications for discharge permits, the Council will have regard to:
  - (a) Existing water quality and uses of the subject water body;
  - (b) Community aspirations for future use of the water body (as expressed in submissions on consent applications);
  - (c) Opportunities for enhancement of water quality;
  - (d) Relevant water quality guidelines (refer also Methods 7.06.07 to 7.06.10)

**Explanation:** *The policy sets out the Council's interim position with respect to the processing of discharge permit applications pending the preparation of a classification for Northland's freshwater bodies. It recognises that notwithstanding the (interim) classifications established by Policies 7.05.02 and 7.05.03, some water bodies will need to be managed for purposes such as contact recreation and water supply, on an ongoing basis.*

4. The Council will not grant a discharge permit which, either on its own or in combination with other lawful discharges, will result in any of the following effects in the receiving water, after reasonable mixing:
  - (a) The production of any conspicuous oil or grease films, scums or foams, or floatable or suspended materials;

- (b) Any conspicuous change in the colour or visual clarity;
- (c) Any emission of objectionable odour;
- (d) The rendering of freshwater unsuitable for consumption by farm animals.

Except where:

- (i) exceptional circumstances justify the granting of a permit; or
- (ii) the discharge is of a temporary nature; or
- (iii) the discharge is associated with necessary maintenance work

Where a discharge is granted in reliance on the exceptions above, the Council may impose conditions requiring the holder of the discharge permit to undertake works in such stages throughout the duration of the permit that will ensure that upon expiry of the permit (or such earlier date as is specified in the conditions) the holder can meet the requirements of Policies 7.05.02 or 7.05.03, whichever is applicable.

**Explanation:** *The policy allows for control of the cumulative effects of more than one discharge in an area. It refers to the minimum water quality standards contained in ss.107(1) of the Act. The exceptions refer to the exceptions contained in ss.107 (2) of the Act.*

5. When determining what constitutes a reasonable mixing zone, the Council will take into account:
- (a) The characteristics of the discharge and the sensitivity of the receiving water;
  - (b) The assimilative capacity of the receiving water body;
  - (c) The proximity and effects of other discharges;
  - (d) The proximity of, and likely effects on, downstream uses;
  - (e) The desirability of keeping the mixing zone as small as practicable;
  - (f) The availability and cost-effectiveness of current treatment technology.

**Explanation:** *The policy sets out the criteria which will be used to determine the size and shape of the mixing zone, outside of which receiving water quality standards are expected to be met.*

*The expression “assimilative capacity” in (b) includes reference to existing receiving water quality, and the depth, width and flow characteristics of the receiving water, including the nature and extent of dilution and dispersal that occurs.*

6. To ensure that water quality is managed appropriately in situations where water bodies possess high ecological values which are dependent on water quality.

**Explanation:** *In some situations, the standards that relate to aquatic ecosystem maintenance may not be sufficient to adequately safeguard*

## 7.8 TRANSITIONAL POLICY

1. When considering any application for a discharge the consent authority must have regard to the following matters:
  - (a) the extent to which the discharge would avoid contamination that will have an adverse effect on the life-supporting capacity of fresh water including on any ecosystems associated with fresh water and
  - (b) the extent to which it is feasible and dependable that any more than minor adverse effect on fresh water, and on any ecosystem associated with fresh water, resulting from the discharge would be avoided.

This policy applies to the following discharges (including a diffuse discharge by any person or animal):

- (a) a new discharge or
- (b) a change or increase in any discharge –

of any contaminant into fresh water, or onto land in circumstances that may result in that contaminant (or, as a result if any natural process from the discharge of that contaminant, any other contaminant) entering fresh water.

This policy does not apply to any application for consent first lodged before the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management takes effect on 1 July 2011.

**Explanation:** *This policy has been inserted into the Water and Soil Plan to give effect to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011. It specifies the matters the regional council must consider when assessing and determining an application for a discharge permit. This policy is transitional in nature and is intended to maintain the life-supporting capacity of freshwater until freshwater quality limits and targets are established in the Water and Soil Plan by way of a plan change (as required by Policy A1 and Policy A2 of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011).*

*The policy applies in addition to other assessment matters in the Water and Soil Plan and in considering all decisions on resource consents for new discharges and/or changes/increases in existing discharges. The policy does not affect activity status but does provide a basis for applying consent conditions.*

*The policy does not apply to new consents or replacement consents for an existing discharge where there is no change or increase in the discharge. Nor does it apply to discharges authorised by a permitted activity rule.*

## 8.7 POLICIES (NB ADDITIONAL TRANSITIONAL POLICY ON PAGE 80)

1. To require all new discharges of sewage or discharges with a high organic content to be:
  - (a) By land disposal; or
  - (b) To water, if after reasonable mixing:
    - (i) it does not cause a discernible adverse change in the physico-chemical and/or microbiological water quality of the receiving water at the time of discharge; and
    - (ii) it is the best practicable option (as defined by Section 2 of the Act).

Cross-references: 6.04.01, 6.04.02

**Explanation:** *Discharges of effluent containing high organic matter can be defined as those effluents which, if discharged to water, are likely to change the dissolved oxygen regime of the receiving water. Such changes may lead to the death of aquatic life and/or the production of undesirable growths such as sewage fungus and slimes.*

*In Northland, discharges with high organic content include those from human and animal effluents, decomposing vegetable matter, animal and food processing, and leachates from solid wastes.*

*Direct discharges of contaminants into water, particularly sewage and animal effluent, are offensive to the Northland community. This was made clear during public consultation for the preparation of the Regional Policy Statement. Discharges to water also degrade the traditional, cultural and spiritual values that tangata whenua hold for water and water bodies. It is therefore intended that wherever it is practicable, all discharges will eventually be to land. This is also consistent with policies in the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement regarding the maintenance and enhancement of water quality in the Coastal Marine Area. Before a new discharge of sewage or discharge with a high organic content to water is allowed, the Council will need to be satisfied that all other options, particularly land disposal have been considered.*

*The best practicable option approach takes account of the financial implications, and the effects on the environment, of that option when compared with other options, as well as the current state of technical knowledge and the likelihood that the option can be successfully applied.*

*For the purposes of this policy, a discernible adverse change in physico-chemical and/or microbiological water quality is defined as a change in all or any of the following:*

*The physical properties or characteristics;*

- (b) *The chemical composition; and*
- (c) *The microbiological content of the receiving waters.*

**Note:** *That applicants for new consents should consult with Regional Council staff regarding appropriate levels of accuracy in testing and measurement methodologies in order to determine whether a discernible adverse change is likely to occur. Note also the requirements of Objectives 7.04 and 9.04 and their associated policies, to maintain and enhance water quality.*

*For the purposes of this policy, a new discharge is defined as a discharge:*

- (a) *From a treatment and disposal system which did not exist at the time this Plan was proposed (April 1995);*
  - (b) *From a treatment system which replaces or enhances an existing treatment system;*
  - (c) *From the same treatment system to a different receiving water body.*
2. To require by the year 2004 or according to an upgrading programme established as part of the conditions on a discharge permit all existing discharges of sewage or discharges with a high organic content to be:
- (a) By land disposal; or
  - (b) To water, if after reasonable mixing:
    - (i) it does not cause a discernible adverse change in the physico-chemical and/or microbiological water quality of the receiving water at the time of discharge; and
    - (ii) it is the best practicable option (as defined by Section 2 of the Act)

Cross-references: 6.04.01, 6.04.02

**Explanation:** *The move to land based treatment and disposal will markedly improve the water quality of Northland's water resources.*

*Discharges existing before the notification of this document will be required to be upgraded over a period of time as decided by the Council through its Annual Plan process. Criteria for upgrade priorities are given in the methods based on the actual and potential effects of the discharge on the environment.*

3. To ensure there are adequate separation distances between water bodies and discharges to land to avoid or mitigate adverse effects on water quality.

**Explanation:** *There are many other discharges of small volumes containing high concentrations of organic matter and discharges of larger volumes containing low levels of contaminants. The adverse effect of those discharges can be avoided by requiring adequate separation between the discharge point or disposal area and the surface water body or groundwater.*

4. To promote effective effluent treatment and disposal systems which are:
- (a) Low maintenance and low risk;
  - (b) Land based, where the soil types, available disposal areas, back-up facilities and pumping systems are adequate;

Disposal of solid waste, including hazardous wastes is an issue for both regional and District Councils. Liaison and co-ordination of efforts between the Councils is required to achieve the objectives.

The following methods relate to co-ordination and liaison:

8.10.01      8.14.04      8.14.07      8.14.08

## 8.20 TRANSITIONAL POLICY

1. When considering any application for a discharge the consent authority must have regard to the following matters:
  - (a) the extent to which the discharge would avoid contamination that will have an adverse effect on the life-supporting capacity of fresh water including on any ecosystems associated with fresh water and
  - (b) the extent to which it is feasible and dependable that any more than minor adverse effect on fresh water, and on any ecosystem associated with fresh water, resulting from the discharge would be avoided.

This policy applies to the following discharges (including a diffuse discharge by any person or animal):

- (a) a new discharge or
- (b) a change or increase in any discharge –

of any contaminant into fresh water, or onto land in circumstances that may result in that contaminant (or, as a result if any natural process from the discharge of that contaminant, any other contaminant) entering fresh water.

This policy does not apply to any application for consent first lodged before the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management takes effect on 1 July 2011.

**Explanation:** *This policy has been inserted into the Water and Soil Plan to give effect to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011. It specifies the matters the regional council must consider when assessing and determining an application for a discharge permit. This policy is transitional in nature and is intended to maintain the life-supporting capacity of freshwater until freshwater quality limits and targets are established in the Water and Soil Plan by way of a plan change (as required by Policy A1 and Policy A2 of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011).*

*The policy applies in addition to other assessment matters in the Water and Soil Plan and in considering all decisions on resource consents for new discharges and/or changes/increases in existing discharges. The policy does not affect activity status but does provide a basis for applying consent conditions.*

*The policy does not apply to new consents or replacement consents for an existing discharge where there is no change or increase in the discharge. Nor does it apply to discharges authorised by a permitted activity rule.*

- (a) *The taking, use, damming, or diversion is expressly allowed by a rule in a Regional Plan [and in any relevant Proposed Regional Plan] or a resource consent; or*
- (b) *In the case of fresh water, the water, heat, or energy is required to be taken or used for-*
  - (i) *an individual’s reasonable domestic needs; or*
  - (ii) *the reasonable needs of an individual’s animals for drinking water-*  
*and the taking or use does not, or is not likely to, have an adverse effect on the environment; or*
- (c) *In the case of geothermal water, the water, heat, or energy is taken or used in accordance with tikanga Maori for the communal benefit of the tangata whenua of the area and does not have an adverse effect on the environment; or*
- (d) *In the case of coastal water (other than open coastal water), the water, heat, or energy is required for an individual’s reasonable domestic or recreational needs and the taking, use, or diversion does not, or is not likely to, have an adverse effect on the environment; or*
- (e) *The water is required to be taken or used for fire-fighting purposes.*

Under the definition section of the Act “fresh water” means all water (surface water and groundwater), except coastal water and geothermal water.

Provisions in this Plan relating to surface water management cannot be inconsistent with the objectives and policies in the Regional Policy Statement.

Section 30(1) of the Act states the following as Regional Council functions in respect of water quantity:

- (c) *The control of the use of land for the purpose of - ...*
  - (iii) *the maintenance of the quantity of water in water bodies and coastal water:*
  - (iiia) *the maintenance and enhancement of ecosystems in water bodies and coastal water:*
  - ...
- (e) *The control of the taking, use, damming and diversion of water and the control of the quantity, level and flow of water in any water body including-*
  - (i) *the setting of maximum or minimum levels or flows of water;*
  - (ii) *the control of the range or rate of change of levels or flows of water.*
  - ...
- (g) *In relation to any bed of a water body, the control of the introduction or planting of any plant in, on, or under that land, for the purpose of-*
  - ...
  - (iii) *the maintenance of the quantity of water in that water body:*

### 9.3 ISSUES

1. The taking, damming or diversion of surface water can adversely affect the life supporting capacity, the natural character and intrinsic and amenity values of rivers, lakes and wetlands.
2. The cumulative effects of taking, damming or diversion of surface water on the availability of water for domestic needs, stock and water demanding land uses.
3. The lack of surface water adversely affects the social, cultural and economic well being of the community.
4. The wastage and inefficient use of surface water.
5. The potential for loss or degradation of the mauri and wairua of water bodies from taking, using, damming and diverting of water.
6. The demand on river water resources may exceed the availability of water during low flow periods in some areas.
7. The need to be able to determine river and stream flows to a required level of accuracy.
8. The need to improve knowledge and understanding of the effect of water level and flow and land use change on the biology, ecology and chemistry of rivers, lakes and wetlands.

### 9.4 OBJECTIVES

1. **The maintenance of water flows and levels in rivers, lakes and indigenous wetlands that are sufficient to provide for the preservation of their natural character, safeguard life-supporting capacity, and has particular regard to protecting their intrinsic ecosystem, amenity and cultural values.**
2. **The sustainable management of Northland’s surface water resource whilst avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse environmental effects.**
3. **The efficient use of surface water.**

### 9.5 POLICIES (NB ADDITIONAL TRANSITIONAL POLICY ON PAGE 100A)

#### **Rivers, or Sections of Rivers, and Lakes deemed to have Outstanding Values**

1. To recognise that the following rivers, or sections of rivers, and lakes have outstanding features and values for which it is appropriate to regulate the taking, use, damming and diverting of water for:
  - Waipoua;
  - Whirinaki;
  - Waipapa;

## 9.8 TRANSITIONAL POLICY

1. When considering any application the consent authority must have regard to the following matters:
  - (a) the extent to which the change would adversely affect safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of fresh water and of any associated ecosystem and
  - (b) the extent to which it is feasible and dependable that any adverse effect on the life-supporting capacity of fresh water and of any associated ecosystem resulting from the change would be avoided.

This policy applies to:

- (a) any new activity and
- (b) any change in the character, intensity or scale of any established activity –

that involves any taking, using, damming or diverting of fresh water or draining of any wetland which is likely to result in any more than minor adverse change in the natural variability of flows or level of any fresh water, compared to that which immediately preceded the commencement of the new activity or the change in the established activity (or in the case of a change in an intermittent or seasonal activity, compared to that on the last occasion on which the activity was carried out).

This policy does not apply to any application for consent first lodged before the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management takes effect on 1 July 2011.

**Explanation:** *This policy has been inserted into the Water and Soil Plan to give effect to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011. This policy is transitional in nature and is intended to maintain the life-supporting capacity of freshwater until provisions are established in the Water and Soil Plan by way of a plan change to give effect to Policy B1 (allocation limits), Policy B2 (allocation), and Policy B6 (over-allocation) of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2011.*

*The policy specifies the matters the regional council must consider when assessing and determining an application for a resource consent involving the take, use, damming or diversion of freshwater or the drainage of wetlands that is likely to have more than minor adverse effects on natural flows and levels of freshwater. This policy applies to all such activities which require consent under the Water and Soil Plan. The policy does not affect activity status but does provide a basis for applying consent conditions.*

*The policy does not apply to new or replacement consents for an existing activity where there is no change in the character, intensity or scale. Nor does it apply to permitted activities or where the activity involves only minor adverse effects on freshwater flows or levels.*

11. The long-term cooling of the water in geothermal aquifers if the water is extracted at such a rate that the time for heating the recharged water is reduced. The cooling of the water may result in mineral deposits within the fractures of the rock, reducing or stopping spring flows. This, in turn, may also cause water to discharge at other locations which may not be currently affected by geothermal waters.

## 10.4 OBJECTIVES

1. **The sustainable use and development of Northland’s groundwater resources while avoiding, remedying or mitigating actual and potential adverse effects on groundwater quantity and quality.**
2. **The sustainable management of groundwater resources in conjunction with the sustainable management of surface water resources.**
3. **The management of groundwater resources so that the potential adverse effects of land subsidence are avoided.**

***Explanation:** The objectives seek to allow the use and development of Northland’s groundwater resources while ensuring that effects on other groundwater users, surface water users and values, and on land, are avoided, remedied or mitigated.*

## 10.5 POLICIES (NB ADDITIONAL TRANSITIONAL POLICY ON PAGE 112)

### Sustainable Use and Development

1. To ensure the sustainable use of groundwater resources, by avoiding groundwater takes that exceed recharge which result in any of the following:
  - (a) Saltwater intrusion or reduced groundwater quality;
  - (b) A lowering of the groundwater table below existing efficient bore takes;
  - (c) A lowering of the temperature of geothermal waters in geothermal aquifers and springs;
  - (d) Adverse effects on surface water resources in terms of Policy 10.05.07.

***Explanation:** This policy requires that groundwater allocation and use, including that of geothermal water, is managed in a way that does not result in the loss of the resource or limit its use.*

*This policy also promotes “efficient bore takes”. An example of an efficient bore take is when a bore fully penetrates the water bearing layer and takes water from the base of the aquifer. The water level in a bore, which is only partially penetrating an aquifer or is drawing water from the top of the aquifer, may be drawn below the bottom of that bore as a result of water being taken (at a sustainable rate) from another deeper bore. The user of the shallow*

*bore has not lost his or her use of the groundwater resource. Rather, the method of extraction is no longer effective.*

*It would be wasteful management of the groundwater resource, should shallow water supply bores restrict the use of an available resource.*

*Similarly, when a take reduces the pressure of an aquifer it may cause a flowing artesian bore to stop flowing. In this case, the use of the resource is not limited, nor is the user denied the resource. Another method is simply required to make the water available, that is, the installation of a pump.*

*This policy promotes efficient management of the available groundwater resource. It recognises that some groundwater reduction must occur if the resource is to be used, but it does not necessarily mean that use of the resource is lost. Any reduction should be a short-term effect, which is remedied through recharge of the aquifer.*

*The policy also promotes the avoidance of adverse effects on surface water, which may result from taking groundwater.*

*Refer also to Method 10.05.07.*

### **Aquifers ‘At Risk’**

2. To recognise that aquifers ‘at risk’ to adverse effects may be in locations where:
  - (a) The overlying soils are suitable for water intensive land uses; or
  - (b) There are limited surface water resource; or
  - (c) There are numerous springs; or
  - (d) One of the aquifer’s boundaries is sea water; or
  - (e) On-site effluent disposal occurs over unconfined aquifers; or
  - (f) There is geothermal activity; or
  - (g) The aquifer’s recharge area is compromised by inappropriate subdivision, use or development.

***Explanation:*** *Use of aquifers with the particular characteristics listed is likely to result in adverse effects such as reduced groundwater quantity and quality. Where there are numerous springs fed by the aquifer, these springs could be adversely affected by lowering of the water levels in the aquifer.*

### **Knowledge of Aquifers**

3. To improve understanding of groundwater aquifer systems.

***Explanation:*** *Groundwater aquifer systems are extremely complex and difficult to understand as most of the system is hidden under the ground. Important information can be gained by studying the aquifer profile from bore logs, interpreting the hydraulics of the aquifer from pump tests, and monitoring groundwater levels.*

### 10.7.2 Education, Provision of Information and Advice

Groundwater is, to a large extent, poorly understood by the public. Many still refer to groundwater as being underground streams. There is also a lack of understanding as to how groundwater behaves. Education will minimise the concerns that many people have with respect to groundwater takes and their potential adverse effects.

Results of groundwater monitoring and information on the number of bores being drilled in particular areas, should also be passed on to relevant District Councils for water supply and sewage disposal strategies.

The following methods relate to education, provision of information and advice:

10.06.07      10.06.09      10.06.11      10.06.26

### 10.7.3 Investigation and Monitoring

The methods are based on the assumption that the Council's existing groundwater monitoring will continue, including groundwater levels and groundwater quality. Monitoring the state of the environment and the effectiveness of regional plans is a specific function of the Council but it is considered to be a significant method of achieving the objectives and policies in its own right.

Increasing the Council's knowledge of Northland's groundwater resources relies also on the geological and pump test information provided by drillers. This information is also important to indicate the intensity of water use in a particular area of an aquifer.

Groundwater management of aquifers with a high demand requires detailed knowledge of how the aquifer system works. While this information is available for some aquifers, such as Aupouri Peninsula, further investigations are required in others, such as the Kaikohe basalts, to gain a better understanding of the hydrologic cycle of the aquifer.

The following methods relate to investigations and monitoring:

10.06.01      10.06.02      10.06.06      10.06.09      10.06.12  
 10.06.13      10.06.14      10.06.15      10.06.17      10.06.19  
 10.06.27

### 10.7.4 Advocacy

Land uses can affect the recharge of aquifers. The Council will liaise with the District Councils to promote the protection of aquifer recharge zones.

The following method relates to advocacy:

10.06.16

## 10.8 TRANSITIONAL POLICY

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  - (b) the extent to which it is feasible and dependable that any adverse effect on the life-supporting capacity of fresh water and of any associated ecosystem resulting from the change would be avoided.

This policy applies to:

- (a) any new activity and
- (b) any change in the character, intensity or scale of any established activity –

that involves any taking, using, damming or diverting of fresh water or draining of any wetland which is likely to result in any more than minor adverse change in the natural variability of flows or level of any fresh water, compared to that which immediately preceded the commencement of the new activity or the change in the established activity (or in the case of a change in an intermittent or seasonal activity, compared to that on the last occasion on which the activity was carried out).

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*The policy specifies the matters the regional council must consider when assessing and determining an application for a resource consent involving the take, use, damming or diversion of freshwater or the drainage of wetlands that is likely to have more than minor adverse effects on natural flows and levels of freshwater. This policy applies to all such activities which require consent under the Water and Soil Plan. The policy does not affect activity status but does provide a basis for applying consent conditions.*

*The policy does not apply to new or replacement consents for an existing activity where there is no change in the character, intensity or scale. Nor does it apply to permitted activities or where the activity involves only minor adverse effects on freshwater flows or levels.*