

Aaron Mark Bainbridge and Julianne Sally Bainbridge trading as Oroteere Farm Ltd

We are making this statement on Northland Regional Council application for Resource Consent REQ.596300
ASTR:ASLU

We own, and live on with our family a 135ha dairy farm, and 38ha support block in Waiharara in the Far North. We are self-employed. Our sons attend local schools. We support many local businesses and contractors. Julianne was a volunteer for the local playgroup, Dairy Women's Network and DairyNZ, and Aaron was on the Far North District Council drainage board. We feel passionately about raising the next generation of New Zealanders, and the environment we will leave them. We farm with one bore for stock water, cowshed and back up house supply, and 38ha support block with a bore for stock water.

We are not against irrigation as it plays a valuable role in maintaining soil health, makes land more productive and should be encouraged. Irrigation can strategically place moisture and nutrients to benefit the microbial life in the soil, and if used from harvesting of surplus water, also slows the leaving of water from the land which has huge benefits for the water cycle and health of the water.

One of our concerns is that the modelling being used overestimates the amount of water in the aquifer. The applicants' experts are being paid to present an argument for an outcome which benefits the applicants. They are using their own hydrologists with their own model using their own data which is created from best guesses.

The amount of water currently being taken from the aquifer is unknown. Every bore which is drawing from this aquifer should be monitored with a smart meter so the information could be used as part of a more robust model. At least if this information was on hand it would eliminate one of the guesses in the modelling.

We believe the way the aquifer is perceived to recharge is incorrect. Our experience on our land in the past fourteen years indicates that the rain does not permeate the land due to the sandstone pan. There has been a historic loss of wetlands and the mass draining of land in the wider Kaitaia area which have not been taken into account. The age of the water in the aquifer may be an indication of how long it takes to get there.

If the modelling is incorrect and saline intrusion occurs it will not be remedied in our lifetime. The implications all of this will have for our property and for our current activity is huge. If saline intrusion was to occur we would have to cease our farming operation as alternatives like desalination will not be cost effective.

If the level of the aquifer drops when pumping occurs, our pump may not be suitable. It is important that the water we use to clean our milking plant meets Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) standard because this water can potentially come in contact with milk and affect its quality. Our water is assessed in three areas, one of which is clarity: water must be relatively free of solids. Our cows also require good quality, clean drinking water. Even if our level remain static we may experience clarity issues. Even if there are small changes in the water table, combined with the effect of recharging not happening the way it is modelled, it will still have effects over time, including effects on stream and spring flows.

There has been a huge amount of "guess work" in the modelling and we feel that until more monitoring has been done over a period of not less than ten years, there should be no further consents for irrigation granted from this aquifer. All of the aquifers in New Zealand have been over allocated and are suffering the effects of this. Kaitaia is a town which doesn't presently have a reliable water source. People should be given priority. This finite resource should be available for future generations, but appears to be being used as a first in first served water grab to increase people's worth. There is

no indication or justification for the amounts of water being sought under this application. Current orchards in the area appear to be using between 11 and 30m³ of water which indicates some of these applicants are wanting two to three times what they “need”.

Should the application be approved against the wishes of some of the community, Northland Regional Council should disclose who it expects to be liable to the community should the aquifer fail. If our bores are impacted we would expect to have temporary water supplies provided to us until a permanent alternative source of water can be provided, at the applicants’ expense.

We would also like to express our disappointment with the way the consultation has been carried out. The less than one month timeframe was too short for affected parties to submit on an application that will have major environmental effects on such a significant resource and the elite soils of the Aupouri Peninsula. It means we have missed several points in our original submission which are relevant but unable to be included here.

We oppose the application in its entirety. We seek the council to refuse consent. Those requesting new water rights should be required to store harvested surplus water in tanks or dams to satisfy their needs. It is irresponsible to grant further consents for water take without having accurate information on the water currently available, being used, and accurate knowledge which takes into account the historic loss of wetlands and the mass draining of land in the wider Kaitaia area on the way that the water in the aquifer will be replenished. We should be role modelling to our younger generation that just because a resource is there, it does not give us the right to use it.