

6 December 2023

ORGSTR-1512315375-1884

Hon Todd McLay  
Minister of Agriculture  
Minister of Hunting & Fishing  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

Tēnā koe Minister

## **Briefing for Incoming Minister – Agriculture, Hunting & Fishing**

Congratulations on your appointments as Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Hunting & Fishing. Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) shares your passion for using land sustainably and the right of New Zealanders to hunt and fish. We look forward to working with you to advance shared outcomes for our communities.

We would like to bring **five** matters to your attention:

- 1. Harmonise treatment of feral ungulate (deer, pigs, goats) control in legislation:** We are keen to work with you to achieve a strategic approach to feral ungulate control that will meet the needs of hunters, assist landowners to prevent decimation of their land and crops, and protect our regional biodiversity. We would like to see that approach reflected in a review of the Wild Animal Control Act 1977, to address sections relating to powers of entry for control purposes, which undermine our control effectiveness and overall investment in biosecurity.

More broadly, because of the major shifts that feral ungulates cause in forest diversity and composition, GW needs the ability to list them in our Regional Pest Management Plan.

- 2. Progress a Cat Management Act to protect NZ's biodiversity and agriculture, and safeguard pet cats.** Cats are one of NZ's favourite pets, but poor cat management is leading to armies of stray and feral cats ripping through our native wildlife. Feral cats decimate rare species of birds and lizards, and transmit toxoplasmosis to sheep, humans, and native wildlife. Compulsory microchipping and de-sexing will help limit cat populations, support education programmes, and enable feral cat control in designated locations.
- 3. Nationwide monitoring and control of Canada geese populations:** Uncontrolled populations of Canada geese are now consuming large quantities of grass and fouling wetlands, paddocks, sports fields, parks, and amenity areas in our region and beyond. For Canada geese control to work effectively, Government needs to step up, resource it properly and lead it out.

4. **Use climate policy to drive environmental restoration work:** The current settings of the Emissions Trading Scheme do little to encourage landowners to plant indigenous forest or create or restore wetlands because the returns from planting pines to earn emissions units are much greater. Without changes, the country will end up with a lot of permanent pine forests but no better biodiversity, cleaner water, or lower gross emissions.
5. **Keep existing national direction under the national planning framework; extend implementation deadlines.** Greater Wellington supports the key direction of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management and is well into the process of implementation through formal notifications of Plan Changes to our Natural Resources Plan. However, the timeline imposed by the previous Government is unachievable for us, our partners, and the community. We would support implementation by the end of 2026, in line with your proposed commitments.

Please find attached further information in the Appendix regarding our proposal for improving the biosecurity of the Wellington region, and thus enhancing our biodiversity and regional resilience.

We would be pleased to meet with you to discuss how we may work effectively together and with others for the benefit of New Zealand's environment.

Ngā mihi



**Daran Ponter**  
Chair

CC: Minister of Hunting & Fishing, Minister of Conservation, Leaders and Deputy Leaders of Government Coalition Partners, Wellington Constituency Members of Parliament, Wellington Region Mayors: Wellington Region Chairs, Mana Whenua Iwi, Local Government New Zealand