



Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee

Summary

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Targeted Improvements to Conservation Planning Processes and Initiating a Review of the Wildlife Act 1953

Portfolio Conservation

Given the significant programme of reform work currently underway across government, it is proposed to defer a decision on comprehensive conservation legislation reform. Instead, agreement is sought to:

- progress targeted amendments to conservation management planning and concessions legislation during this term of government; and
- initiate a review of the Wildlife Act 1953.

The proposed legislative reform roadmap, including timeframes, is in **Appendix 1**. An overview of the legislative framework for the conservation of natural and historic resources is in **Appendix 2**.

The Minister of Conservation recommends that the Committee:

- 1 note that the proposals in the paper under ENV-21-SUB-0056 support the government's manifesto commitment to protect, preserve and restore New Zealand's natural heritage and biodiversity, and the cooperation agreement commitment to work with the Green Party to achieve the outcomes of *Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020*;
- 2 note that one of the goals identified in *Te Mana o te Taiao – Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020* is to review natural resource legislation to ensure it enables thriving biodiversity;
- 3 note that, regarding comprehensive conservation law reform:
 - 3.1 decisions will be for a future government to make;
 - 3.2 the reform will require a phased approach;
 - 3.3 the Department of Conservation is doing work internally to prepare for future reform of the conservation legislation system;
 - 3.4 recent and upcoming analysis, reviews, and reports from within and outside of government will provide some options for possible reform pathways;

- 4 note that future legislative reform proposals will consider and appropriately manage interaction with existing Treaty settlements and current Treaty settlement negotiations;
- 5 note that while early preparatory policy analysis is underway, there are other opportunities to deliver direct, incremental improvements to address government priorities;
- 6 note that in December 2016, the previous government agreed to policy directions for some conservation management planning and concessions amendments [EGI-16- MIN-0334];
- 7 note that streamlining conservation management planning and concessions processes and decision-making would improve environmental outcomes and provide benefits to stakeholders, tangata whenua, local government, and central government;
- 8 note that initiating a review of the Wildlife Act 1953 will support future reform of species legislation or comprehensive conservation legislation reform;
- 9 agree to:
 - 9.1 progress targeted amendments to conservation management planning and concessions legislation;
 - 9.2 initiate a review of the Wildlife Act 1953;
- 10 authorise the Minister of Conservation to release the conservation reform roadmap, which will be periodically updated;
- 11 invite the Minister of Conservation to report back to the Cabinet Environment, Energy and Climate Committee (ENV) during the OIA S9(2)(f)(iv) seeking policy decisions on amendments to conservation management planning and concessions provisions;
- 12 invite the Minister of Conservation to report back to ENV during OIA S9(2)(f)(iv) with an update on the review of the Wildlife Act 1953.

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