

**From:** [Patrick West-Oram](#)  
**To:** [Kayla.Wilson@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:Kayla.Wilson@parliament.govt.nz)  
**Cc:** [Peter Galvin](#); [Nicola Molloy \(Policy Manager\)](#); [Sam Thomas](#); [Ben Reddix](#); [Lars Ivarsson](#); [Government Services](#)  
**Subject:** 25-B-035 Email advice request - Hunting and Fishing Portfolio Cabinet Papers  
**Date:** Tuesday, 11 February 2025 11:20:00 am  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Kia ora Kayla,

As requested please see advice below on these two cabinet papers. I will send the CORM you requested separately;

**25-B-0035 Email Advice on Hunting and Fishing Portfolio Cabinet Papers**

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Please see below bullet points to send to MOC summarising the two recent Cabinet Papers he received as part of Ministerial consultation (both of which are from MHF).

**Amendments to the Game Animal Council Act 2013 to clarify the provision for Herds of Special Interest in national parks**

- This Cabinet Paper seeks agreement for the Minister for Hunting and Fishing (MHF) to commission drafting of a Bill to amend the Game Animal Council (GAC) Act 2013. This amendment is made as part of the Government's priority to introduce two Herds of Special Interest (HOSI) this parliamentary term.
- You will have an interest in how the proposed amendments interact with:
  - The National Parks Act 1980 and the role of the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA)
  - The potential impact of HOSI on Fiordland National Park's status as part of the *Te Wahipounamu - South West New Zealand* UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Introducing HOSI for wapiti, sika and tahr is a key commitment in National's Plan for Hunting and Fishing, and a priority for the Minister for Hunting and Fishing. HOSIs are intended to enable the management of a herd of game animals for hunting purposes, while ensuring conservation values are protected.
- The Minister is proposing to introduce this legislation under urgency at Budget 2025. We expect that this may take some conservation stakeholders by surprise. This may result in increased contact with you or the Minister for Hunting and Fishing to question why they were not involved in a consultation process.
- DOC considers this legislative change will remove existing risks of legal challenge and provide greater certainty for managing introduced species with associated conservation benefits in National Parks.

## ***The National Parks Act and the Role of the NZCA***

- The Cabinet paper proposes a small legislative amendment to the Game Animal Council Act 2013 to clarify that the National Parks Act requirement to 'exterminate introduced animals as far as possible' does not apply to animals managed as a Herd of Special Interest (HOSI). As a result, no determination from the NZCA would be necessary to allow a HOSI in a national park. The introduction of this legislative amendment will progress work to potentially introduce a HOSI for wapiti deer (North American elk) in Fiordland National Park.
- HOSI can be designated under the Game Animal Council Act 2013 by the responsible Minister, including in national parks. However, the National Parks Act 1980 states that introduced animals (including game animals) must be 'exterminated as far as possible', unless the NZCA makes a determination otherwise. This has created ambiguity, because it isn't possible to both exterminate a herd of game animals while simultaneously managing it for hunting purposes. This is evidenced by a recent legal case (currently paused), brought by Forest and Bird, concerning an existing community agreement between the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation and DOC to manage wapiti in Fiordland National Park for both hunting and conservation reasons.
- The proposed amendment would clarify that these provisions in the National Parks Act would not apply to animals under any future HOSI established in a National Park. However, the Minister does not intend to make changes to the National Parks Act 1980 or dilute conservation outcomes.
- A herd considered for designation as a HOSI would need to undergo the statutory process set out in the Game Animal Council Act to establish a Herd Management Plan (HMP) before it can be introduced. This Herd Management Plan must be consistent with 'overriding considerations', including national park management plans and general policies, and would be subject to consultation as set out in the statutory process.
- A reduced role for the NZCA, by removing their role in making a determination, follows a similar objective to your proposals, currently being consulted on, to make wider changes to the conservation management system. As you are aware, this includes moving other decision-making functions away from NZCA.

## ***Fiordland National Park as a part of Te Wahipounamu - South West New Zealand***

- As Minister responsible for UNESCO World Heritage Areas (WHA), you may wish to

consider that the introduction of a HOSI in Fiordland National Park must be accompanied by an impact assessment against the region's Statement of Universal Value (SOUV) to ensure it will not damage the region or its status as a WHA. Officials will conduct a thorough assessment during the statutory process to designate a HOSI, which will also be publicly consulted on. DOC does not believe this will present an issue. It is officials' opinion that a HOSI in Fiordland National Park is consistent with the SOUV.

Out of scope

**Patrick West-Oram | Principal Policy Advisor ([he/him](#))**

Hunting, Fishing and Economic Development

Policy and Regulatory Services Group

Department of Conservation—*Te Papa Atawhai*

s9(2)(a)

*Please note I work 0.9 and finish at 3pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays*

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