

Memo: Confirming timeline and next steps for Herds of Special Interest

To	Minister for Hunting and Fishing	Date submitted	13 December 2024
GS tracking #	24-B-0632	DocCM	DOC-7836729
Security Level	Sensitive		
From	Sam Thomas, Director Policy, s9(2)(a)		
Subject	Confirming timeline and next steps for Herds of Special Interest		
Attachments	N/A		

Purpose – Te aronga

1. This item confirms your request to take forward legislation to amend the Game Animal Council Act (the GAC Act) through Budget Night urgency and identifies next steps.

Background and context – Te horopaki

2. At the 2 December Minister's meeting you confirmed your preference to progress legislative amendments to the GAC Act via urgency on Budget Night.
3. This legislation will provide technical clarification on the relationship between provisions to introduce a HOSI under the GAC Act, and certain requirements under the National Parks Act 1980. Given this interaction, we recommend you speak to Minister of Conservation (MOC) ahead of lodging a Cabinet Paper to inform him of your intentions.
4. To pass a Bill through Budget Night urgency, you will need agreement from the Leader of the House (LoH). The LoH's agreement should be included in your legislative bids submission. Cabinet will discuss its view on the legislative programme at the end of January 2025. The draft Bill will need to have cleared Cabinet by mid-April 2025.
5. You have indicated you will speak to the LoH prior to the end of the year to discuss including this Bill in the Budget Night process. Following this conversation officials will prepare a letter to seek formal approval for this process from the LoH.

Sequencing of advice and timeframes

6. You have indicated you wish to begin the statutory consultation process for the sika Herd Management Plan (HMP) early in the new year while simultaneously seeking legislative change to allow for a wapiti HOSI, and to progress a wapiti HMP subsequently. To meet tight timelines, we anticipate that we will split decisions on sika and wapiti HOSI into two papers:
 - a) Initial evaluation of the draft wapiti proposal, including costs and funding options. The paper will also include a draft Cabinet Paper to progress legislative change for Ministerial and agency consultation. Substantive assessment of wapiti proposal will follow Budget 2025. (See timeline below)

- b) Evaluation of the draft sika proposal, including costs and funding options. This will provide the option to begin the statutory process for the sika Herd Management Plan (HMP). (See timeline below).

7. Indicative key milestones are set out below:

Milestone	Date
Briefing on Legislative Bids sent to your office	17 January 2025
Cabinet discusses legislative programme for 2025 Parliamentary Session	End January 2025
Briefing and draft Cabinet Paper on wapiti proposal and GAC Act amendment to your office	W/C 20 January 2025
Ministerial/Agency Consultation	W/C 27 January 2025
ECO Committee	12 February 2025
Briefing seeking approval to begin sika HMP statutory consultation	14 February 2025
LEG Committee	10 April 2025
Budget Night	TBC May 2025

s9(2)(f)(iv)

Risk assessment – Aronga tūraru

10. As previously noted, there are risks in choosing this approach. This includes losing time to pass both wapiti and sika HOSI this term if the Bill falls out of the Budget Night package at late stage and a different parliamentary slot is needed to pass under urgency. We also expect a high level of scrutiny on the decision-making process after the legislation has passed. The public will have no opportunity to comment on proposals under this process, and stakeholders may question the proposals and the use of the Budget Night urgency process.
11. We note that changing legislation through a standard legislative and policy process would still allow delivery of both HOSI this term [memo 24-B-0582 refers]. This process will not be as fast as the Budget Night process but would mitigate some of the risks highlighted above.

Next steps – Ngā tāwhaitanga

12. We will provide a more fulsome briefing on the Budget Night process in early 2025.
13. We will also provide a letter for you to send to the LoH on the use of the Budget Night process in January 2025.

ENDS