Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

Briefing: National Conservation Policy Statement process

To	Minister of Conservation	**Date submitted**	19 May 2025
Action sought	Agree to DOC informing PSGEs of the intended consultation approach to the NCPS	**Priority**	Very High
Reference	25-B-0207	**DocCM**	DOC- 10318624
Security Level	In Confidence	**Timeframe**	21 May 2025
Risk Assessment	High The window for targeted consultation on the National Conservation Policy Statement before drafting is tight. Missing this window will mean it is not possible to consult without delaying implementation of the reforms.		
Attachments	No attachments		

Contacts	
Name and position	**Phone**
Ruth Isaac, Deputy Director-General, Policy and Regulatory Services	s9(2)(a)

Purpose – Te aronga

1. This briefing provides you an overview of the proposed process for developing the National Conservation Policy Statement (NCPS) and seeks your agreement to DOC informing post-settlement governance entities (PSGEs) of this process ahead of Cabinet decisions on the Conservation Amendment Bill.

Background and context – Te horopaki

2. You are seeking Cabinet approval to start drafting your amendments to modernise conservation land management in the coming weeks. This includes replacing the existing general policies with the NCPS and including the first iteration of the NCPS as part of the Conservation Amendment Bill (the Bill). Inclusion in the Bill will mean NCPS content is subject to public consultation through the select committee process.

3. The Cabinet paper outlines your intention to seek Cabinet agreement to the content of the NCPS in August or September 2025. It also outlines your intention to undertake targeted consultation with Iwi and key stakeholders on the content of the NCPS, with materials to be approved by you, the Minister for Economic Growth, the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality and the Minister for Resources.

4. DOC is engaging with PSGEs on how to uphold Treaty settlement redress through the reforms. DOC intends to continue the dialogue with PSGEs beyond introduction of the Bill and support them in preparing for select committee.

Timeframes and process for the National Conservation Policy Statement

The NCPS will be developed at pace to include it in the Bill

5. Cabinet agreement to issue drafting instructions for the NCPS needs to be sought in August or early-September to allow the Parliamentary Counsel Office (PCO) time to draft it as part of the Bill in time for introduction. We propose the following approach:

Milestone	**Dates**
Prepare NCPS content for targeted consultation	May and June
Ministerial approval of consultation materials	Mid-to-late-June
Targeted consultation (two weeks only)	30 June to 13 July
Revise policies, prepare Cabinet paper and RIS	Mid-July to August
Cabinet agreement for PCO to draft NCPS	August/September
PCO drafts NCPS as part of the Bill	September and October
Introduction of the Bill	November/December

We suggest two weeks of targeted engagement on draft NCPS content in early July

6. We recommend sharing a set of draft policies, with supporting material, with a narrow list of parties and requesting written feedback within two weeks.

7. We intend to seek comment directly from the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA), PSGEs, Tourism Industry Aotearoa, the Environmental Defence Society, and the Concessionaire Reference Group (Tourism Export Council, RealNZ, Trojan, NZSki, Bus and Coach Association, Active Adventures, Fox Glacier Guides, Federated Farmers, Minerals Council).

8. Allowing two weeks for engagement in early July will allow the policies to be revised before you return to Cabinet in August/September.

9. It will not be possible to hold NCPS-specific hui in addition to the ongoing engagement with PSGEs as doing so would divert resources needed to progress the reforms. However, we intend to engage with the NZCA as we prepare NCPS content for consultation. We also intend to involve Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu given the significant amount of conservation land in their takiwā and their representation on the NZCA.

10. We recommend that DOC sends emails to PSGEs and key stakeholders informing them of the proposed process as soon as possible. Waiting until after Cabinet will leave PSGEs and others with very little time to prepare for the consultation. Any correspondence will be clear that the proposed process is subject to Cabinet's agreement and therefore may change.

11. It is likely that PSGEs will criticise the timeframes and nature of the consultation as not being fulsome engagement or co-development. Our view is that this is the most effective way to support informed decision-making without delaying the progress and implementation of the overall reforms.

12. More fulsome consultation would require delaying introduction of the Bill or not including the NCPS in the Bill. Not including it in the Bill would mean people are unable to engage on the content of the NCPS through the select committee process.

Next steps

13. Subject to your approval, DOC will send emails to PSGEs as soon as possible.
14. We will provide a briefing in mid-June seeking your approval, alongside the Minister for Economic Growth, the Minister for Tourism and Hospitality and the Minister for Resources, of the NCPS policy matters to be consulted on.

We recommend that you … (Ngā tohutohu)

		Decision
a)	**Note** that officials intend to discuss the contents of this paper at your Status Meeting on Monday, 19 May.	
b)	**Note** that DOC is engaging with post-settlement governance entities on how to uphold Treaty settlements in the Conservation Amendment Bill process, alongside this targeted engagement on the content of the NCPS.	
c)	**Agree** that DOC will email post-settlement governance entities and key stakeholders outlining when they can expect to receive draft NCPS policies and how long they will have to input.	Yes / No

s9(2)(a)

Date: 19/05/2025

Ruth Isaac
Deputy Director-General, Policy and Regulatory Services

Date: / /

Hon Tama Potaka
Minister of Conservation

ENDS