



# Essential Freshwater— What you need to know

In their current form, the proposed freshwater regulations announced by the Government will penalise low emitters and adversely affect sheep and beef farmers more than any other sector. It is vital farmers get involved and have their voices heard.

## B+LNZ's key concerns

**1. Grandparenting**—Proposed grandparenting provisions would lock farmers in at their existing level of emissions, farming systems and land uses. This means that low emitting farmers will have no ability to make any changes that would increase any of their modelled on-farm nitrogen, phosphorous or sediment emissions, even by a small amount. This includes adjusting stocking rates, inputs or changing land use. Flexibility and the ability to adapt and innovate has been an integral part of the resilience of the sector to date.

**2. Compliance costs**—We believe the actual costs to meet these proposed regulations are well in excess of what is being estimated and from a cumulative perspective, exceed the action required to manage our particular risks. Our analysis suggests additional costs including:

- Being grandparented in land uses, farming systems, and potential discharges
- The need for managing sediment in many catchments around the country including planting, retirement of land. Land Environment Plans and potentially LUC mapping and on-farm monitoring
- New fencing requirements on lowlands, and potentially in hill country, depending on stocking rates of cattle
- Consents for any hill country cropping
- Requirements under the Freshwater module to measure all emissions and in particular to use Overseer, and potentially other models like mitAgator, and then reduce all discharges, irrespective of the level of the discharge and water quality health.

## 3. Putting sheep and beef farmers out of business—

Economic modelling by Local Government New Zealand estimate that land under sheep and beef production in a Waikato catchment could decline by 68% as a result of the essential freshwater proposals. This is due to a combination of increased compliance costs and lack of flexibility for farmers to adjust their systems to meet these costs, therefore making many farms unviable.

This impact is consistent with economic modelling B+LNZ carried out in the recent Waikato PC1 process as Waikato is considering similar policies to the Essential Freshwater package.

## What we have been doing?

- This week, we met with Minister Shane Jones, Minister Damian O'Connor, Todd Muller (National agriculture spokesman) and Mark Patterson (New Zealand First agriculture spokesman). We will be meeting with more MPs over the coming weeks.
- We will be meeting with Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) officials next week.
- We are working with other agricultural industry organisations to identify common issues and ways to collaborate. The CEOs of all these organisations met last week and the Farming Leaders Group Chairs will be meeting this week.
- B+LNZ roadshows and DairyNZ/Federated Farmers/B+LNZ meetings.
- Undertaking an economic analysis of the impacts and developing farm level case studies to illustrate the real-life effect of these proposals.
- Ensuring your case is presented in the media.

## How farmers can get involved?

- Attend Ministry for the Environment meetings and raise these concerns.
- Write a submission. We will provide you with a template.
- Lobby your local MP and Mayor.



### For more information go to:

[www.beeflambnz.com/freshwaterconsultation](http://www.beeflambnz.com/freshwaterconsultation)

[www.beeflambnz.com/sites/default/files/action%20for%20healthy%20waterways.pdf](http://www.beeflambnz.com/sites/default/files/action%20for%20healthy%20waterways.pdf)

[www.dairynz.co.nz/environment/in-your-region/essential-freshwater-package/](http://www.dairynz.co.nz/environment/in-your-region/essential-freshwater-package/)