

10 October 2019

Ministry for Primary Industries  
PO Box 2526  
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By email: soils@mpi.govt.nz

## **PROPOSED NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT ON HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE LAND**

1. The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) wishes to provide feedback on '*Valuing highly productive land: A discussion document on a proposed national policy statement for highly productive land*' (NPS-HPL) (discussion document). At this stage, this feedback is not intended to be a formal submission, but NZDF wishes to align with the public consultation phase. NZDF would welcome the opportunity to discuss its feedback with the Ministry for Primary Industries and / or the Ministry for the Environment.

### **Background**

2. NZDF operates a number of Defence facilities across New Zealand, for the purpose of national security, protecting national interests, providing civil assistance, and other activities as provided for under the Defence Act 1990. Some of these facilities are located on land that has the potential to be classified as highly productive under the NPS-HPL. NZDF also undertakes a range of Temporary Military Training Activities (TMTA) in rural areas throughout New Zealand.
3. This feedback discusses NZDF's interests in relation to the proposed NPS-HPL, particularly regarding potential implications on Defence infrastructure, operations and activities. NZDF wishes to ensure that its Defence facilities and activities are not constrained by additional protections afforded to highly productive land, as a result of the NPS-HPL.
4. NZDF's feedback on specific draft objectives and policies is provided in Table 1, attached to this letter (Attachment 1).

### **Definition of Highly Productive Land**

5. Proposed Policy 1 sets out that regional councils must identify areas of highly productive land in their region, using the criteria set out in Appendix A of that policy. These criteria include the Land Use Capability classification system, the suitability of the climate for primary production and the size and cohesiveness of the area. There are also further factors set out that local authorities *may* consider when identifying areas of highly productive land. Policy 1 identifies specific

exclusions to the definition, being “urban areas” and “areas that been identified as future urban zones in district plans”.

6. Given the regional and national importance of defence facilities and the significant role they play in both military training and civil and national defence operations, NZDF requests that Proposed Policy 1 is amended to specifically exclude defence facilities from the definition of highly productive land. If this relief is not accepted, then NZDF requests that a new criteria that councils must have regard to when identifying highly productive land is added, as follows: “whether the land is designated for defence purposes in district plans”.
7. The discussion document also includes a default definition of highly productive land based on LUC classes 1-3 that would apply in the interim period, until councils have identified highly productive land in their region.<sup>1</sup> This interim definition has the potential to apply to certain NZDF sites, such as the Linton Military Camp. NZDF requests that defence facilities are also excluded from this interim definition.

### **Recognition and protection of Defence activities**

8. NZDF undertakes a range of TMTA throughout New Zealand. These activities are critical to ensuring NZDF maintains its operational capacity and responsibilities under the Defence Act 1990. There is potential for TMTA to be undertaken in areas that come under the definition of highly productive land.
9. Proposed Objective 3 aims to identify and protect highly productive land from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. Proposed Policy 2 aims to maintain highly productive land for primary production, including by giving greater protection to areas of highly productive land and identifying and protecting highly productive land from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
10. NZDF requests that Proposed Objective 3 and Proposed Policy 2 are amended to include provisions that recognise and provide for defence activities, so as not to hinder or prevent NZDF undertaking these activities on land identified as highly productive.

### **Recognition and protection of Nationally Significant Infrastructure**

11. NZDF requests that Nationally Significant Infrastructure is recognised and provided for in the NPS-HPL, as well as in any document prepared under the NPS. Page 37 of the discussion document sets out that “*providing for nationally significant infrastructure on highly productive land may be appropriate where this can largely co-exist with using highly productive land for primary production, there are significant public benefits from that infrastructure and there is a functional need to be located in that environment*”. However, there are currently no provisions proposed to recognise and protect nationally significant infrastructure on land identified as highly productive.

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<sup>1</sup> Where a local authority has not identified highly productive land in accordance with Policy 1 and Appendix A, highly productive land is a land parcel in a rural area that contains at least 50% of land or 4 ha (whichever is the lessor) of land defined as Land Use Capability 1, 2 and 3 as mapped by the New Zealand Land Resource Inventory or by more detailed site mapping.



12. Appropriate recognition includes providing a definition for Nationally Significant Infrastructure that explicitly includes 'Defence facilities' and a policy framework that provides for and recognises that it will sometimes be necessary to locate nationally significant infrastructure on highly productive land. Relief may include, but is not limited to, amending Proposed Objective 3 and Proposed Policy 2 to specifically recognise and provide for nationally significant infrastructure.

### **Connections with other National Policy Statements and national direction**

13. NZDF considers it essential that the national policy documents currently under development are consistent with and complement each other.

### **Closing comments**

NZDF wishes to engage with the Ministry of Primary Industries and / or the Ministry for the Environment further in relation to the development of the NPS-HPL, prior to the NPS being finalised and released. Please contact Lucy Edwards on [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucy Edwards'.

**Lucy Edwards**

Senior Environmental Officer  
Defence Estate and Infrastructure

**Table 1: NZDF submission on specific draft objectives and policies**

| Draft provision  | NZDF requested amendments and comments  |
|--|---|
| <p>Default definition of highly productive land</p> <p><i>(That would apply in the interim period, until councils have identified highly productive land in their region).</i></p> | <p>Amend the interim definition to exclude defence facilities.</p>  |
| <p>Proposed Policy 1: Identification of highly productive land</p>   | <p>Amend the criteria identifying highly productive land to exclude defence facilities.</p> <p>Alternatively, add a new criteria that councils must have regard to when identifying highly productive land, as follows: <i>“whether the land is designated for defence purposes in district plans”</i>.</p> |
| <p>Draft Objective 3: Protecting from inappropriate subdivision, use and development</p>   | <p>Include provisions to provide for defence activities to occur on highly productive land. Further, include provisions to ensure that Nationally Significant Infrastructure located on highly productive land is protected and provided for.</p>   |
| <p>Draft Policy 2: Maintaining highly productive land for primary production</p>   |   |