

To: Tasman District Councilors

From: Charmaine Marie Gallagher, PhD

Date: 23 September 2010

RE: Mapua Draft Plan Change and Structure Plan – Residential and Rural Closed Zones

Good Morning Councilors,

Charmaine Gallagher, PhD in Fisheries and Wildlife & Economics of Natural Resources Management.

I am here today to address the danger of creating specific land use policies from scientific modelling exercises.

The policy before you regarding Residential and Rural Closed Zone areas in the Mapua region relies on non peer reviewed coastal flood modelling based solely on elevation data. The modelling exercise was created as a technical report for coastal hazards and management options. It does not constitute scientific evidence of coastal flooding. The coastal modelling assumed there were no structures on the coast. The modelling exercise does not take into account the recent improvements such as the seawall and presently proposed stormwater projects. Assumptions in models can lead to uncertainty as they provide scenario's rather than evidence. Decisions based on assumptions in models are not defensible. Bjorn Lomborg of Copenhagen Consensus Centre tells us that "climate science is a subtle and fiendishly convoluted discipline that rarely yields unambiguous forecasts or straightforward predictions."

Scientific speculation has a place to address district wide coastal concerns. However, Council Staff using this modelling exercise as rigorous scientific evidence and using this information as a blanket endorsement to downzone properties on the coastal zone is suspect. The Residential and Rural Closed Zones proposed in the Structure Plan document do not reflect the magnitude of the potential hazard. The Structure Plan does not address the potential for property improvements and mitigations for stormwater and coastal hazards. This is a dangerous precedent and the Structure Plan does not improve the status quo.

Why do I think this is important to bring before you today? I am familiar with land use and coastal planning. I was a County Planning Commissioner for 4 years in a district with 250,000 people similar to Tasman District. I know the dangers of implementing specific policies using speculative and untested scientific modelling information. It is expensive to defend and can lead to high costs for lawyers and Councils.

I have participated in the TDC December 2009 workshop and submitted my concerns with Council Staff but have had no further consultation regarding the proposed closed zones.

Changes in climate and geography can be cost effectively managed.

Please reconsider the nature of the evidence before you progress the Residential and Rural Closed Zone of the Mapua Structure Plan.

Fear of repercussions from Council Staff have kept other coastal residents from being here today.