

Press Release for immediate release

Wednesday 1 May 2013

Local Bill Will Not Stop Potential Legal Action

Kaipara District Council Commissioners have approved the wording of a Local Bill aimed at resolving historical rating errors made by previous Councils.

However, they stressed again that a Local Bill would not stop Kaipara District Council from potentially taking legal action against those responsible for matters in relation to the expansion of the Mangawhai Community Wastewater Scheme.

In December last year Commissioners said a Local Bill was the best way to help resolve rating errors made back to 2006. They believed the Select Committee and public submission process would make it easier for local people to have their say. The Bill would ensure all mistakes would be fully exposed to public scrutiny, including to questions from Members of Parliament across the spectrum they said.

At a meeting on Monday, Commissioners approved notification of the final Bill. In his report, Chief Executive Steve Ruru noted that the scope of the Bill had been widened to ensure that Select Committee members could address any related issues arising from the public consultation process.

“Widening the scope of the Bill means people will be able to express their views on a much wider range of areas. This is an opportunity to shine a light very publicly on what occurred; it’s important all issues are discussed fully and transparently. “

Chair of Commissioners John Robertson reiterated that Council was “keeping its options open” in regard to possible legal action against those involved in the Mangawhai Community Wastewater Scheme. The Local Bill would not impact on the ability of Council to seek financial redress, he said.

“If by taking legal action, we are able to recover costs and reduce the financial impact of the Mangawhai Wastewater Scheme on ratepayers, then it is likely we will do that. There is a very strong call from the community that those at fault be held accountable and Commissioners support that call.”

Any decision on potential legal action would not be made until the Office of the Auditor-General released its independent report into the Scheme.

The Local Bill has now been publicly notified and will be available from Council offices and on its website until 23 May 2013. It will then be introduced to Parliament where it is expected to be referred to a Select Committee.

Commissioners will ask the Select Committee hold hearings in the Kaipara District to assist local people in having their say.

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