



DRIFTING SANDS HOKITIKA

RU-2022-0039 Seawall Submission - OPPOSE APPLICATION

[REDACTED]

DATE: 12 July, 2023

Claire O'Connell

Owner & Residents: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

My Submission is that: I oppose the 'current' seawall application.

As guardians and residents of this amazing stretch of beach we made the decision to purchase our land because we wanted to immerse ourselves in the stunning landscape. As owners we observe all its intricate changes on a daily basis living on and with the beachfront. We are constantly in awe of things like the changing tides, the driftwood collections, the sand drifts, the wind direction, the stone piles that come in go and the varied wildlife that call this beach their home.

We monitor and see change on a daily basis. Over the years since the last 2019 erosion, we've seen the growth of foliage, the habitats of penguins, seals, weka, skinks and free range bunnies. The flora and fauna including the flourishing of rare species like basket mushrooms. Please see my attached photos and the basket mushroom pre erosion and now just last week. When we faced erosion in 2019, i took the necessary actions to protect the vegetation where I could and all that I saved from the eroding banks I replanted it further back and today it flourishes, bamboo, flaxes and sea grasses.

Please note, with my submission I talk about my immediate and neighbouring shorefront (157 - 197 Revell St) and although it continues like this a fair way along I am aware it is not the same for all residents and some further down the end near Richards drive face erosion today which may need attention sooner rather than later. One solution is not always ideal for every occupiers problem.

I would like to bring attention to the fact that extending this seawall will not only be an absolute eyesore, but it will also have a detrimental effect on the unique environment. It will definitely disrupt the delicate balance of wildlife who we share this beachfront with.

The people of Hokitika and beachfront residents are passionate about their land, and I implore the decision makers to listen to our views on this matter. Our coastal area is a unique gem that should be preserved, and not transformed into an industrial eyesore as an 'incase' of event solution. It would be a great loss for the town of Hokitika, as well as for all those who have been lucky enough to experience its beauty firsthand.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As much as we appreciate the need for a sea wall should conditions change, we also care about the preservation of our privacy and the natural beauty of our surroundings.

Our beachfront is already a spectacular promenade, and we have cycle trails in every direction. An access road or cycle trail would cause severe damage, not to mention the extortionate cost and devastating effects on the vegetation and wildlife. The points of an access road are not clear in the council's submission but have been thrown around by many 'handballing' the topic as responsibility of the construction company. I feel the road could cause even more detrimental damage than the stonewall due to its apparent location property side of the proposed wall.

Moreover, our lucrative tourism industry is a significant asset to our town. We cannot afford to compromise it with a poorly considered plan. As an accommodation host over the past ten years and manager of four beachfront properties in this catchment, I have hosted many guests from all over the world who appreciate the unspoiled, untamed, raw beauty of our west coast beachfront and come back year on year spending considerable money in our town and with tourism providers.

I am against 'this' proposal because it goes against the preservation of our natural environment and I believe that there are other potential solutions. What are the other cost-effective long-term solutions, longer than 15 years, such as beach nourishment or using permeable geotextile fabric, which can protect the coastline, generate more vegetation growth and without blocking off access to the beach.

In 2019 for almost two years guests had to access the beach north of my shorefront as the precarious rock placement was too dangerous to navigate. Fortunately, things were quiet post pandemic so the shore had time to rebuild. Today, five years on, the beach is accessible with abundant new growth and established dunes 10+ meters out from the past unconnected rock wall.

The health of our environment should prevail. The current seawall application is a short-term solution that will have long-term consequences for our community and environment. Some unanswered questions come to mind...

1. Has the council looked into alternatives before moving forward with this design? It has been a very rushed proposal pushed to us with only two weeks to give our feedback.
2. Have there been successful past seawalls like this built - where there is proof this design works? In theory, since the coverage of the last seawall we already now have a mini version of what you propose with rocks so called covered by stone.
3. As a designer of 30+ years, it is always advisable to seek up to three design solutions/quotes in answer to a brief to see how they compare.

What was the design brief in choosing this company and what is their experience and success in this arena?

4. Upon talking to Paul at Baca - the company who designed the proposed wall, he had no knowledge that the placed green and pink pegs would remove so much aged, established vegetation. Was this not identified in the design brief and why did the team placing the pegs not report back on what can only be considered a major impact on our vegetation to remove so much well-established vegetation and ill effects on wildlife.
5. The current location of the seawall (marked by the green and pink pegs) necessitates the removal of a significant stretch of bush, scrub, and trees in its proposed area. This will result in the loss of numerous mature trees, countless Cabbage Trees, and other native vegetation.
6. Trees play a crucial role in stabilising soil and preventing erosion. They offer nesting habitats for birds and provide shelter from strong winds. Will the team be required to replant a sufficient number of trees to ensure the stability of the sand dunes?
7. How does this proposal fit with our local authority's and the nations commitment to protecting the environment and preserving our coastline?
8. What are the long-term implications for flora and fauna should this seawall be constructed?
9. Rates increases are specifically aimed at residents on Revell Street. The purpose of this seawall is to safeguard the township from downhill tidal surges, and it should be funded by all ratepayers.

I do not oppose the idea of a sea wall altogether, but we need a proposal that takes into consideration all factors. I believe we are all on the same page and as townspeople, owners/occupiers of Revell Street even more so as we want to preserve the safety of our beloved homes and town while maintaining the beauty and serenity of our beachfront.

I think it is crucial that all parties involved, including council, owners, engineers, designers and contractors must work together to ensure that our foreshore and its inhabitants are protected. We are in this together and what may be brilliant for some foreshore properties may not be the best solution for others.

The proposed plan needs to be transparent at every level so consent can be gained and understood - highlighting every part of the proposed solution. Including contractors and how they will gain access and build a proposed solution - should the time come, trigger points reached and consent has been agreed upon.

I BELIEVE THE PROPOSED PLAN MUST NOT BE MORE DESTRUCTIVE THAN THE PROBLEM IT AIMS TO SOLVE!!

This proposed plan would be far more devastating than any previous storm.

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I might agree to an application if the specified conditions below were fulfilled.

1. I support the 'trigger line' concept as noted in several other submissions if it was in line with the newly established sea grasses and dunes that have developed in the past few years. These are true evidence the tides have not been coming up higher than this for some time. See pics for reference.
2. Move the seawall further towards the sea to safeguard the existing vegetation corridor and wildlife habitat. Do not remove any of the established vegetation which is home to so much wildlife.
3. Ensure that the construction is carried out exclusively from the ocean side, without causing any disturbance to the inland terrain and vegetation.
4. Ensure that no access roads or public walkways are constructed on the property side of the proposed seawall.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasise that I strongly oppose the CURRENT seawall application. Building THIS proposed seawall would have an irreversible impact on our beautiful coastline, years of established vegetation and trees and its wildlife and should only be undertaken once a consented design solution is agreed upon by a majority of home owners and occupiers, a trigger line is reached, design meets with national RMA guidelines and the above points are agreed to.

My goal is to see a solution that will bring harmony between our Revel Street community, the environment, and our essential tourism industry. A more holistic plan needs to be considered, one which weighs up the benefits of preserving our natural environment and homes against any potential risks.

We need to consider the cost, both financial and environmental of constructing a seawall. We need to consider alternatives which may mitigate erosion without destroying our raw and untamed natural beachfront.

I believe that in order for Hokitika to remain an attractive destination for tourists and locals alike, we must take great care to preserve our environment and ensure it is not damaged further by rushed, un-consented solutions – we owe this to the future generations.

Thank you for taking my submission into consideration.

Yours sincerely,
Claire O'Connell, Owner & Resident 197 Revell Street, Hokitika

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All of this will be removed



All of this will be removed



See well established sea grass and dunes



Markers are way too far back!



Well establish dune succulents



Well established saved flaxes



Well established saved flaxes



Well established sea grass and new dunes building



Protected cabbage tree and two new babies



Ileodictyon cibarium
Basket Funghi 2023



Ileodictyon cibarium
Basket Funghi 2019



Ileodictyon cibarium
Basket Funghi 2018



Seal on our beachfront



Seal out front of our beachfront



Seal in our beach garden



Seal in our beach garden
stayed for two days



Lost Penguin I rescued
out front Dec 2022



Sleeping Baby Seal in our
beach garden