

Hearing submission of:

Joanna Parsons, Dave Ritchie, and WNZ (formerly NZRCA)

For HDL Stockton Plateau Application RC08/131

My name is Jo Parsons, I grew up in Westport, I now live in Hokitika and work in Greymouth. I am the Programme Co-ordinator for Tai Poutini Polytechnic's Advanced Leadership and Guiding Certificate. I teach in the outdoors, predominantly as a kayak instructor. I've been kayaking for 15 years. I hold NZOIA Kayak II, the highest awarded qualification for kayaking in NZ.

I am speaking on behalf of myself, Dave Ritchie, and Whitewater New Zealand (WNZ, formerly NZRCA). WNZ has undergone a renaming and rebranding to better communicate its purpose (which is to preserve NZ's whitewater resources and enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely).

My original submission was in support, conditional on the Darcy Stream Diversion being a compulsory part of the scheme. I accept HDL's response to this and urge the Crown to buy into this part of the scheme should it go ahead. I therefore support the application unconditionally.

I will speak on two other major points:

1. The impact of the proposed scheme on kayaking on the Ngakawau River
2. The bigger picture of HDL's proposal on the West Coast power supply and demand

1. The Ngakawau is a Grade IV/V whitewater run. Kayakers carry their boats up to Mangatini Falls bridge and paddle down.

WNZ's original submission states conditional support, conditional due to lack of knowledge about what effect these flow changes would have on kayaking on the Ngakawau.

Westport kayaker, Rory Devine, who completed the 1<sup>st</sup> kayak descent of the Ngakawau in 1996 and who has probably kayaked the river more than anyone else (around 30 times), states that the run will be relatively unaffected by a mean flow reduction, as the river is paddled as it is dropping after rain. The river has a very narrow window of 'runability' (0.95-1.05 on the old gauge). As the Ngakawau generally rises and falls considerably more than 100mm in a decent rainfall event, it will simply mean the river is paddled sooner after rain or after a little more rain. As rainfall events are no rarity on the coast any change in mean flow is likely to just mean a recalibration of when the river can be paddled. Any improvement in water quality coming from Mangatini Falls would be a welcome trade off!

2. Our support is lent more strongly to the proposal on the relative merits of this scheme versus many of the others currently under consideration.

Hydro power is touted as the answer to our renewable energy requirements. WNZ argues that while the water in a hydro scheme may be renewable or sustainable, the river system that is dammed or degraded to support the hydro scheme is not. Many of our highly valued wild and scenic rivers are under threat.

The Mokihinui is the 7<sup>th</sup> most important biodiversity area in the country.  
The Matakītiki is kayaked by thousands of people each year.  
The Waitaha is the 'Mt Everest' of NZ kayaking.

Our ever increasing demand for power and security of supply for the West Coast and reduced transmission losses are always touted as rationale for these schemes.

Current generation on the Coast - combined with the proposed Arnold and HDL schemes (even at its base operating capacity) is enough to make the Coast self sufficient in power.

Taking degraded water from a degraded area and making power – which we undeniably need - seems like a smart idea!

It seems ludicrous to ruin our pristine rivers when potential for 'smart hydro' like this one exists. If this scheme can reduce the necessity or *perceived* necessity of other more highly valued natural resources being destroyed then why wouldn't we??

We should be currently learning from others mistakes – since 1998 the decommissioning rate for large dams has overtaken the rate of construction in the US (World Commission on Dams, 2000). These costs have not been accounted for in the original schemes – many would not have been viable if the full future cost had been taken into account. Dam operators in the States are going bankrupt or divesting their older dams to limited liability companies to avoid responsibility for the true cost of the projects.

Picture the Matiri, Arahura, Taipo, Toaroha, Kakapotahi.....etc

## Summary

We support this scheme unconditionally due to its merits in the larger picture of power generation and wise natural resource use.