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**SUBMISSION ON THE PROPOSED NEW ZEALAND COASTAL POLICY STATEMENT 2008  
SECTIONS 49 AND 57 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991**

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**To:**           **BOARD OF INQUIRY PROPOSED NZCPS**  
C/- Department of Conservation  
PO Box 10 420  
**WELLINGTON 6143**

**Submitter:**   **SURFBREAK PROTECTION SOCIETY** (“Protection Society”)  
(Service information at end of notice)

1.     This is a submission on the **Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2008** (“NZCPS”).
  
2.     The specific provisions of the NZCPS that the Protection Society’s submission relates to are:
  - 2.1    Policy 20 - Surf breaks of national significance.
  
  - 2.2    New Policy XXX - Surf breaks of regional significance.
  
  - 2.3    Policy 30 - Integrity and functioning.
  
  - 2.4    Policy 36 - Assessment and protection of natural character.
  
  - 2.5    Glossary – Natural character.
  
3.     The Protection Society’s submission is that:

**Policy 20 - Surf breaks of national significance**

- 3.1    The Protection Society strongly **supports** the notified version of Policy 20 insofar as it marks a significant step towards improving policy guidance to decision-makers on the sustainable management of rare, finite and threatened geographical features.

### **Policy 20 – Naming the location of surf breaks**

- 3.2 The Protection Society **supports** the identification of the location of surf breaks within Policy 20. However, there is presently some inconsistency between the naming of specific breaks and the naming of places where the breaks are located. For consistency, the Protection Society seeks that Policy 20 is amended to identify the places where the surf breaks of national significance are located.
- 3.3 The places where surf breaks of national significance are located are Ahipara, Piha, Raglan, Taranaki Surfhighway 45, Gisborne, Whangamata, White Rock, Kaikoura, Dunedin and Papatowai.
- 3.4 The identification of the aforementioned places would provide a consistent and robust means of identifying nationally significant breaks and reflect the minimum precautionary approach necessary for ensuring the identification and preservation of nationally significant breaks.

### **Policy 20 - Sub-paragraphs (a) and (b)**

- 3.5 The Protection Society **supports** the wording of sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) of Policy 20 as representing an appropriate balance between preservation of nationally important surf breaks and the protection of access to, use and enjoyment of such surf breaks.
- 3.6 However, the wording of Policy 20(a) addresses only those activities that occur in the coastal marine area. Activities in the wider coastal environment have the potential to affect surf breaks in the coastal marine area. That is, land and river activities can impact on the coastal marine area by modifying harbour and beach hydrodynamics (waves including wave focusing, currents, sea level and water level gradients and rip circulations), sediment sources, sinks and transport pathways (e.g. subdivisions, farming and forestry) and engineering construction nearby or on a surf break.
- 3.7 To ensure that nationally significant reefs are protected from the adverse effects of activities occurring above or at mean high water springs the Protection Society seeks that Policy 20(a) is amended to replace the words “coastal marine area” with the words “coastal environment”.

### **New Policy XXX - Surf breaks of regional significance**

- 3.8 There is a considerable variety of surf break types and forms. Each offers different natural waves and associated activity challenges. The importance of retaining the geomorphic diversity of surf breaks therefore needs to be considered in a similar manner to that of biological diversity. The technology to artificially recreate the range and diversity of natural surf breaks has yet to be proven.
- 3.9 Ensuring diversity of surf breaks would ensure that all surfing skill levels are provided for. Surf breaks might not carry a 10 out of 10 surf quality rating but can still be an important ‘nursery ground’, where young people learn to surf before progressing to the ‘advanced’ breaks. Examples of ‘nursery’ beach breaks are Fitzroy beach in New Plymouth, Wainui beach in Gisborne, the Mount Maunganui coastline and St. Clair’s Beach in Dunedin.
- 3.10 New Zealand’s track record in protection of surfing breaks is not good, and even internationally significant breaks have been adversely affected by inappropriate development. The notified version of Policy 20 does not provide sufficient policy guidance to ensure protection of a representative diversity of breaks. In addition, measures to remedy or mitigate adverse effects on surfing breaks have yet to be robustly demonstrated as effective.
- 3.11 The Protection Society therefore seeks that a new policy is added to the NZCPS that requires regional councils to identify and protect surf breaks of regional significance.

### **Policy 30 – Integrity and functioning**

- 3.12 The Protection Society seek that the phrase “dynamic processes and features” under Policy 30(c) is amended to include hydrodynamic processes and features.
- 3.13 Including the term hydrodynamic in Policy 30(c) will ensure that:
- (a) The natural movement of sediment, water and air (which are important for surfing breaks) are provided for as part of the natural character of the coastal environment; and
  - (b) Surf breaks are recognised as a “feature”.

### **Policy 36 - Assessment and protection of natural character**

- 3.14 The last sentence in Policy 36 should be amended by inserting Policy 20 between the words “Policies” and “30”.
- 3.15 The Protection Society seeks the aforementioned changes are made to ensure that regional councils actively provide for the preservation and protection of surf breaks of national significance together with other matters of national priority.

### **Glossary - Natural character**

- 3.16 The Protection Society is concerned that the use of the term natural character throughout the NZCPS may potentially be interpreted as being limited to visual landscape and seascape values.
- 3.17 The Protection Society therefore seeks that the term natural character is defined in the glossary of the NCPS to identify the full range of values that make up natural character including soundscape and odourscape.

4. The Protection Society seeks the following decisions:

### **Policy 20 - Surf breaks of national significance**

- 4.1 That Policy 20 is amended to identify the places where surf breaks of national significance are located as follows:

The surf breaks at Ahipara, Piha, Raglan, Taranaki Surfhighway 45, Gisborne, Whangamata, White Rock, Kaikoura, Dunedin and Papatowai, which are of national significance for surfing, shall be protected from inappropriate use and development, including by: ...

- 4.2 That Policy 20(a) is amended to replace the words “coastal marine area” with the words “coastal environment” as follows:

ensuring that activities in the coastal environment do not adversely affect the surf breaks; and ...

### **New Policy XXX - Surf breaks of regional significance**

4.3 That the following new policy is added:

Regional councils shall identify in regional coastal plans regionally significant surfing breaks that reflect the diversity of types of breaks and range of surfing skill levels and surfing enjoyment and these shall be protected from inappropriate use and development, including by:

- (a) ensuring that activities in the coastal environment do not adversely affect the surf breaks; and
- (b) avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects of other activities on access to, and use and enjoyment of the surf breaks.

### **Policy 30 - Integrity and functioning**

4.4 That Policy 30(c) is amended as follows:

the dynamic **and hydrodynamic** processes and features that arise from the natural movement of sediments, water and air ...

### **Policy 36 - Assessment and protection of natural character**

4.5 That Policy 36 is amended as follows:

Local authorities shall assess the natural character of the coastal environment of the region or district and provide for its preservation, including by provisions in policy statements and plans that address the national priorities in Policies **20 and** 30 to 35.

### **Glossary – Natural character**

4.6 That the following definition of natural character is added to the NZCPS glossary:

Natural character includes the landscape, seascape, soundscape and odourscape. The natural ambient levels of soundscape and odourscape should be included in any consideration of the effects of proposed activities on the natural character of an area.

5. The Protection Society wishes to be heard in support of this submission.
6. If others make a similar submission, the Protection Society would consider a joint case with them at a hearing.

Dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 2008



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