

Dr Shaw Mead, Dr Kerry Black and Dr David Phillips
PO Box 67
Raglan

9 January 2006

Hon Chris Carter
Minister of Conservation
The Department of Conservation
Freepost Parliament
PO Box 18888
Wellington

Dear Hon Chris Carter:

Re: Potential Negative Impacts of the Whangamata Marina

We are writing to you with respect to the recent approval of a boat marina at Whangamata, which we believe you are now being asked to give consent to. Our expertise is in the area of coastal oceanography, with hydrodynamic and sediment transport numerical modeling of ports, harbours, marinas and the open coast representing a large component of our research and consulting careers – our company, credentials and cv's can be viewed at www.asrltd.co.nz. An area which we also specialize in is surfing science, which includes research and consulting into the form and function of surfing breaks and how surfing amenity can be incorporated into coastal structures. This has led to several parties contacting us with concerns about potential negative impacts to the world-class surfing break at the mouth of the estuary (the Whangamata Bar) due to the construction of the proposed marina.

We have not reviewed the resource consent application, and so cannot comment directly on the findings. However, we wish to ensure that in your consideration of the resource consent, you look closely at what evidence it contains to determine what impacts the development will have on the Whangamata Bar. The Whangamata Bar is a very valuable asset to the Coromandel and New Zealand and has a very large influence on the socio-economics of the town and region. World-class surfing breaks such as the Whangamata Bar are rare natural assets worldwide, and there are many examples where human intervention not directly associated with the break itself have resulted in the loss of these assets (e.g. dams holding back sediment, dredging inside an estuary removing sediment, down-coast structures blocking sediment, etc). A current situation that the surfing community world-wide is aware of is the loss of the Mundaka Bar in Spain. Many of those who have contacted us have pointed out the similarities between the set-up and surrounding coast and estuaries at Mundaka Bar and Whangamata Bar, the main point being that human activities not directly at the location of the break resulted in the loss of Mundaka with huge impacts on the local community – surfing tourism and the Billabong Pro were a major component of the local economy, as the Whangamata Bar is to the Coromandel.

If the application does not presents enough scientific information on how the changes to morphology of the harbour (due to the construction of the marina) will impact on the bar formations at the harbour entrance, then the consent should not be signed off until these impacts are determined.

Yours truly,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'Shaw Mead' written in a cursive style. The second signature on the right is 'Kerry Black', also in a cursive style.

Dr. Shaw Mead, Dr. Kerry Black and Dr. David Phillips