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To: Chief Executive, Hutt City Council

Submission From Alec Skeet on the proposed Lower Hutt District Plan 2025

email address: afskeet@gmail.com. I do not wish to be heard in support of my submission.

This submission expresses my opposition to;

1. The fact that overlays may not accurately reflect conditions on the ground and they do not appear to be precisely measured. This results in a lack transparency/certainty for all concerned and will likely impose unnecessary restrictions and cost on land use.
2. The proposed Outstanding Natural Features overlay being applied to properties along Moores valley road, Wainuiomata.

Objection 1

There appears to be an overreliance on digital modelling and desktop analysis rather than thorough on-site assessments when asserting overlays generally.

Many landowners may be unaware of how these classifications have been made, what they mean for now and in the future, including what downstream impact may arise on their ability to develop or use their land.

Seemingly the council does not intend to provide accurate documentation that precisely depicts where these lines exactly occur on each property. Its not acceptable to rely on a high-level map that is open to interpretation or change overtime.

Property owners precisely know their boundaries today, and must be able to accurately map exactly where an overlay line occurs on their land. This should be supported by formal paper documentation from the council that precisely positions any lines. Additional commentary should state that there is no intention to extend these lines in future unless circumstances change (eg earthquake) and certainly not without full consultation with the property owners concerned.

It is unclear to me how the addition of these new overlays, such as slopes, add additional requirements over and above those that already exist today.

Objection 2

I understand the intention to protect the view of natural landscape of the Remutaka Range. Part 4 of the appendices in the Plan, and I quote states that *"The Remutaka Forest Park extends along nearly the entire length of the range, however the Wainuiomata/ Orongorongo Water Catchment Area is confined to the northern reaches of the range within Hutt City. Along the southern edge of the Remutaka Forest Park there is clear transition from indigenous forest landcover to matagouri and regenerating bush. While, the regenerating landcover is of lower ecological value, it is included within the bounds of the Remutaka*

Range ONL as it is part of the ridge and valley system forming the Orongorongo watershed catchment. Modification to this part of the ONL is limited to grazing, therefore, the landscape retains its expressive and visually striking values."

On this basis, and rather than impact a large number of Land owners along Moores Valley, I **propose that the ONL should follow along the fire break which mainly borders properties and runs along the ridge of the hill separating Moores Valley and the catchment area.**

Noting that decisions are to be made from next year and beyond on the highly contentious discussion on SNAs, I recommend that for the peace of mind of land owners, commentary is added to the proposed plan, clearly stating whether having an ONL on your property will contribute in any way in the determination of having an SNA similarly applied in the future.

In making this comment, I would emphasise that the land in Moores Valley falls under the classification of having a "lower ecological value" and mainly comprising a mix of regenerating bush with extensive tracts of non-indigenous plants, gorse and pine trees etc. Under these considerations the **Expectation is that any form of ONL seeks only to protect the scenic view of the Moores Valley ridge line, and does not necessitate further attention from an SNA perspective.** This is particularly true on the south side of the valley as the extensive area of the water catchment land acts as a strong buffer area to protect ecological and bio-diversity needs, whilst landowners in Moores valley have for a long time also demonstrated their strong commitment to supporting a similar approach without unnecessary controls.

I would urge the council to:

- Provide all affected landowners with clear, physical documentation detailing overlays that apply to their property and why.
- Conduct thorough on-site assessments before finalising classifications to ensure both the accuracy and consistency of applied restrictions to all.
- Apply consideration that the ONL should run along the line of the Fire break and not impact the majority of property owners in Moores Valley.
- Clearly state any intentions of ONL influencing SNA decisions and placement
- Allow affected landowners a fair and affordable opportunity to challenge inaccurate classifications.

The proposed overlays have significant implications for property owners and it is essential that they be applied accurately, equitably and with some insurance that they will not be extended in the course of time. In particular, I recommend that the ONL should not be applied along Moores Valley until these issues are resolved.

Thank you for considering my submission and please acknowledge your receipt by return.

With Regards

Alec Skeet