



NZ Recreational Fishing Council  
PO Box 26 064  
NEWLANDS  
WELLINGTON

option4.co.nz

option4.co.nz  
PO Box 37951  
PARNELL  
AUCKLAND



NZ BIG GAME FISHING COUNCIL  
PO Box 93  
WHANGAREI



NZACA  
PO BOX 12042  
ROTORUA

Minister of Fisheries  
Hon Pete Hodgson  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

1<sup>st</sup> December, 2003.

Email: phodgson@ministers.govt.nz

**Re: Reference Group review of the “Reform of the amateur marine fishing right” draft proposal.**

Dear Sir,

Subsequent to our meeting with you in Wellington, 1/10/03, we have carefully considered and reviewed the proposed Reform Package with a view to determining the level of support we can offer you for the elements proposed. Our review has involved a number of meetings, the commissioning of a legal opinion on some of the proposed changes to the Act and constant discussion between all Reference Group members and their respective organisations. The findings of this review process, whilst taking longer than initially anticipated, further confirm the consensus that exists within the representative organisations. Some elements of the Reform Package are warmly supported, whilst others have been deemed completely unacceptable.

The results of our review of the proposed Reform Package are –

**1. An amendment to section 21** of the Fisheries Act 1996 to provide for explicit allocation criteria the Minister of Fisheries must have regard to when making allocation decisions.

It is our belief that the changes to Section 21 of the Fisheries Act, as suggested in the Reform Package, expose us (the public) to risks that outweigh any benefits. To that end, **we do not support** the changes suggested for Section 21 of the Act and any attempt to amend Section 21, as proposed, will be met with the most vigorous opposition.

**2. An amendment to section 311** to provide non-commercial fishers with a stronger access right where it is established that there is insufficient abundance of a fish stock for both commercial and non-commercial fishers.

**We do support**, in principle, the need for this element of the reform package. Prudence and good process insist we seek legal advice and interpretation of any amendments to legislation. To date, our limited resources have prevented us from completing this work on these proposed changes to legislation.

**3.** Subject to assessing the proposal and determining that certain specified criteria are met, the Ministry will consider commissioning the research necessary to establish abundance and other issues relevant to the proposed amendment to s311.

**We do support** this element of the reform package

**4. A more transparent resource, funding and expenditure process** within the Ministry so that sector groups can see that resources/ funding are being allocated to the most meritorious projects (e.g. in context of the sustainability measures round);

**We do support** this element of the reform package.

**5. The development of an amateur fishing information strategy** to guide research priorities and to better underpin the information needs of the reform proposal, together with a significant increase in funding. Included will be support for a joint amateur fishers/MFish internet system for obtaining information on recreational harvest.

**We do support** this element of the reform package.

**6. MFish to review recreational regulations** (limited review of up to top 10 regulations of most concern) within specified timeframe.

**We do support** this element of the reform package, however, only the sorting of the regulations requiring review will reveal how many regulations in fact require review and the resources required to do same. We note the process by which the regulation review takes place has yet to be discussed and agreed upon.

**7.** When more certain information on the amateur harvest becomes available fishery management decisions based on the 1996 Recreational Fishing Harvest Estimates will be reviewed.

**We do support** this element of the reform package.

The very significant investment of time and effort by all of those involved in this process has identified specific improvements that should be made to the management of our fisheries. The elements of the Reform Package that are supported will require further work. We envisage, and commit to, maintaining our level of participation and input in order to capitalise on the returns from the investment all have made.

Clearly, it is time for MFish Operations Management to engage with the Reference Group. We would draw your attention to Appendix # 3 of the Policy Paper entitled “Fisheries management issues requiring discussion between MFish and amateur fishers” and suggest that these points require ongoing effort and focus to achieve resolution.

On several occasions you have expressed your concern about providing protection for the public’s right to fish for food and recreation. We appreciate your concerns and believe your efforts have been directed toward our best interests.

We remain

Yours faithfully



Jeff Romeril  
President  
NZBGFC



Paul Barnes  
Project Leader  
option4.co.nz



Ross Gildon  
President  
NZRFC

Bill Cronin  
President  
NZACA