

**BEFORE THE COMMISSIONER APPOINTED
BY THE SOUTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL**

IN THE MATTER the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER of resource consents to occupy the Coastal Marine
Area with a tide gate and weir to dam and divert water

AND

IN THE MATTER of an application by **SOUTHLAND REGIONAL
COUNCIL**

**EVIDENCE SUMMARY OF DAVID CONNOR
30 August 2024**

FLETCHER VAUTIER MOORE
LAWYERS
PO BOX 3029
RICHMOND 7050

Telephone: (03) 543 8301
Facsimile: (03) 543 8302
Email: cthomsen@fvm.co.nz
Solicitor: Chris Thomsen

1. My full name is Ian David Connor. I am team leader of Catchment Operations at Environment Southland and am giving this evidence as project sponsor for this application.
2. Environment Southland's Catchment Management Division has applied for resource consents to re-authorise the tide gates and a weir on the Titiroa Stream. The application asked for a term of 15 years. As explained by Mr Thomsen the term now sought is 10 years from the date of any application being granted.
3. The tide gates are regionally significant infrastructure, that provide significant benefit to the local community and wider region as a whole. The economic value the gates contribute to has been estimated as \$1,016,208 per annum.
4. The gates have been in place for a long time and are relied upon, directly and indirectly, by a lot of people. They assist drainage, and provide tide and flood protection along the Titiroa Stream. Around 516 ha of both private and Council owned and leased farmland benefit from the gates.
5. I believe it to be clear the operation of the structures is necessary to continue to provide protection for the land upstream of the gates from a raised water table, which would create greater flood risk and decrease the productive capacity of the land.
6. Regrettably, the previous coastal permit expired without replacement consents being applied for and some conditions being complied with. I have explained this is due to a combination of oversights and staff turnover. Those conditions have now been complied with and the results of the work completed and presented in support of this application.
7. Council recognises and acknowledges the concerns of Awarua Rūnanga. We have tried to work with TAMI to find ways to address the matters raised in Awarua's submission. I understand from their evidence that they still are asking for the consent be declined. Council remain open to discussing ways to address their concerns so that consent can be granted.

8. As explained by Mr Thomsen, following receipt of the evidence from Ngāi Tahu and DOC, Council has reviewed and modified the application in several ways, including proposing the investigation and then installation of a type of fish-friendly gates. Council is asking for some flexibility in the design of the gates so all options can be considered. We want to ensure there is a balance between achieving the objectives of the gates to control the water table and providing for better fish passage. Council is also now proposing a comprehensive monitoring programme to understand how well these steps are working. These amendments sit alongside the mitigation works proposed in the evidence already submitted.
9. To make sure these measures can be actioned in a fiscally responsible way we are asking for 10 years to 2034 for the gates. This will also mean Council can carefully investigate all options for the future of the gates.
10. Council staff are keen to continue to engage with iwi and other parties. We remain open to discussions during this process.

Thank you

Dave Connor