

# Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana Marine Protection Bill — First Reading

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## HAURAKI GULF / TĪKAPA MOANA MARINE PROTECTION BILL

### First Reading

**Hon WILLOW-JEAN PRIME (Minister of Conservation):** I present a legislative statement on the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana Marine Protection Bill.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That legislative statement is published under the authority of the House and can be found on the Parliament website.

**Hon WILLOW-JEAN PRIME:** *I move, That the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana Marine Protection Bill be now read a first time.* I nominate the Environment Committee to consider the bill.

The purpose of this bill is to contribute to the restoration of the health and mauri of the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana. The bill is the product of years of effort from a wide range of people to restore the Hauraki Gulf. It establishes 19 new marine protection areas that, in addition to existing marine reserves in the cable protection zones, will nearly triple the protection in the gulf. These areas are a critical contribution to protecting biodiversity and reversing the decline we have seen in the gulf.

While I am the Minister who has the pleasure of presenting this bill today, many others have contributed to get us to where we are. I would like to acknowledge the work of my colleagues who have previously held both the conservation and oceans and fisheries portfolios in getting us to this point. I would also like to acknowledge the extensive mahi of the Sea Change Stakeholder Working Group for creating an important catalyst for change, with the Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari Marine Spatial Plan. Integral to the development of the wider Revitalising the Gulf package in this bill is the advice, feedback, and contributions from tangata whenua, the members of the ministerial advisory committee, local communities in Auckland, the gulf islands and Coromandel, the Hauraki Gulf Forum, recreational and commercial fishers, and all the individuals whose work has contributed to this moment.

We know how important the gulf is to Aucklanders, and we have heard the call to protect it for future generations. This bill is a huge milestone for much-needed marine protection, and will help to drive a coordinated approach to restoring the health and mauri of our collective taonga, the Hauraki Gulf. Tangata whenua have a long, enduring relationship with Tīkapa Moana - Te Moananui ā Toi and, through mātauranga

passed down over centuries, have developed a deep understanding of the ebbs and flows of te taiao, the environment. Our oceans are essential to New Zealanders' way of life. The Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana is where 1.8 million Kiwis in the region have some of their best experiences, including weekends on the water, exploring rock pools, and picnics on the beach. The gulf is home to a diverse range of habitats and marine life that contributes to the area's rich biodiversity. This includes corals, dog cockle beds, anemones, and seagrass meadows on the sea floor—supporting the wider food web, including kōura rock lobster, migratory tuna, dolphins, Bryde's Whale, and more. It is also an essential and traditional source of food and a vital part of our economy for part of our economy for tourism, sport, and seafood sectors.

It is clear, as highlighted by successive *State of our Gulf* reports, that the gulf is in trouble and needs our support. Kōura - rock lobster were once abundant and are now considered to be functionally extinct in the gulf. Kina barrens are rapidly expanding as their predators decline in numbers. Sustained action is required to prevent this ongoing decline, and marine protection has a key role to play in this—and that is what this legislation delivers: the new marine protection. This bill will create 19 new marine protection areas, including two marine reserve extensions, five seafloor protection areas, and 12 high protection areas. This bill will extend existing marine reserves: the first is Cape Rodney-Okakari Point Marine Reserve, close to Leigh and commonly known as Goat Island—New Zealand's first marine reserve that has provided biodiversity benefits for nearly 50 years; so it is extra special that we can extend the protection here. The second is the iconic Te Whanganui-o-Hei / Cathedral Cove Marine Reserve. This extension will encompass the outer edge of the reef, increasing its protection to these important habitats and the biodiversity they support.

The bill also introduces two entirely new types of marine protection. The five seafloor protection areas created by the bill will restrict activities that have impacts on the seafloor, such as mining and bottom trawling. These areas will protect sensitive habitats such as rocky reefs, kelp forests, and black coral assemblages. Activities that do not impact the seafloor, such as purse seining and most recreational fishing, will be able to continue in these areas. **The bill will also create 12 high protection areas—or HPAs—that will enable protection of biodiversity while allowing for the customary practices of tangata whenua.** These areas are "no-take" and will prohibit activities such as recreational fishing and bottom trawling. The HPAs will provide crucial protection to some of the gulf's most biologically important ecosystems, as well as contribute to a representative network of protection areas.

We are creating protection that recognises the rights of tangata whenua. The way we manage our oceans must give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and recognise Te Ao Māori perspectives. This is an aspect of the bill of which I'm incredibly proud—particularly proud. The rights of tangata whenua throughout the Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana are ensured, supporting cultural practices and kaitiakitanga. The 12 high protection areas created by this bill enable the protection of biodiversity without compromising tangata whenua's ability to engage in important customary practices. This is protection of the environment which supports protection of culture. Customary fishing, managed by the Fisheries Act 1996, can continue in the high protection areas if it aligns with biodiversity objectives of the sites. The Department of Conservation and tangata whenua will work together to set biodiversity objectives for these areas. These will inform how activities are managed within these areas, so they align with conservation aims.

The new legislation to implement the new tools: the bill enables the creation of a network of marine protection areas and new protection tools to maximise conservation benefits for the gulf. Marine reserves are a critical tool to protect biodiversity, and that is why we have chosen to extend the existing reserves—they are effective for protecting marine biodiversity and remain an important part of the marine management system. The high protection areas and seafloor protection areas are new tools and they do not currently exist in legislation, so this bill is required to establish them as a package with the marine reserves. The seafloor protection areas provide vital protection for seafloor habitats, including seagrass beds and rocky reef systems. These ecosystems can be incredibly sensitive to destructive fishing and industrial processes. This is why activities such as bottom contact trawling, mining, and aquaculture are prohibited. However, seafloor protection areas still allow activities that don't impact the seafloor, including most recreational fishing—which means that people will still be able to go fishing with their families and friends in these areas. High protection

areas, like marine reserves, are designed to safeguard biodiversity, with a high level of restrictions. High protection areas differ in that they allow certain Māori customary practices to take place and for restoration activities to improve the marine area. Restoration activities will be carefully managed through a permitting regime outlined in the bill.

What we are protecting: the areas being protected have been carefully selected to contribute an effective network of marine protection in the gulf while minimising—where possible—the impact on people. These areas will help to care for at-risk, high-value, and representative habitats, which host a range of different plants and animal life. Many act as nurseries to juvenile fish that support a thriving and diverse ecosystem. Some of the most biodiverse regions in the gulf will be protected, including areas such as the coastal waters around Kawau Bay and Te Hautoru-o-Toi / Little Barrier Island, and the deep reefs around Cape Colville at the top of the Coromandel—for example, the high protection area at Slipper Island / Whakahau is one of the few remaining areas that has seagrass in the gulf. Seagrass beds are an important habitat as they support biodiversity, improve water quality, and absorb carbon dioxide. Protecting these areas—they will improve the resilience of ecosystems to other pressures like marine pollution, sedimentation, and climate change.

Protecting our ocean for future generations, this bill will provide relief to the Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana and will help us to ensure that our tamariki and mokopuna—and in turn, their mokopuna—will enjoy Tikapa Moana as we and the generations before us have done. We announced the bill earlier this month. We spoke about how New Zealanders recognised the Hauraki Gulf as a national jewel—treasured for its beauty and biodiversity, its cultural significance, and as a place where so many Kiwis play and work. We noted how health and wellbeing are intrinsically linked to the natural world around us and for a significant number of New Zealanders, they see the Hauraki Gulf as their beautiful blue back yard. I am proud to say that this legislation today signifies a chapter for that special back yard. I look forward to the Environment Committee considering this bill and I want to thank them again and the many people who have already contributed to this process through Sea Change, and Revitalising the Gulf. I commend this bill to the House.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

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**BARBARA KURIGER (National—Taranaki-King Country):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It's a pleasure to take a call on the Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill, because the Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana - Te Moananui a Toi—the gulf—is a taonga of natural, economic, recreational, and cultural importance. It covers 1.2 million hectares of coastal area between Mangawhai and Waihi, and is used for aquaculture, fishing, tourism, shipping and transport, amongst other activities. The gulf is valued by manawhenua, as well as others who work, live and recreate there. Due to its national significance, the gulf was designated New Zealand's first marine park under the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000.

So the National Party is supporting this reading of the bill today. We support the intent of where the Government is wanting to take this piece of legislation. What we're open to is making sure that we have a very good select committee process. I know there's been a lot of consultation that's been held to date, but it is always important.

I'm just going to talk a bit about some of the clauses here and some of the regulated parties. So when we look at the regulated parties, they are the recreational and commercial fishers, there's manawhenua, there's marine ecotourism operators, recreational users, further recreational users, community, central government. In the regulatory impact statement, the impact has been assessed for all those groups, and they've been assessed in various parts as low, medium-high, low-medium, and a range of other assessments. But what we want to do is hear from those groups coming in the room and we look forward to a full and fulsome select committee process, because this is such an important issue.

But it is really important that we get the balance right between all of the groups while we actually protect the Hauraki Gulf, and it really does need protecting. There are so many things going on in there: the kina barrens, the habitat loss, the local fisheries depletion, and something that Chlöe Swarbrick and Tama Potaka have

brought to my attention strongly over recent days is the seaweed species that's invasive, the *Caulerpa brachypus* and *Caulerpa parvifolia*. I didn't realise until recently just how quickly this awful, invasive seaweed had spread. It has only been there since mid-2021, at Aotea Island - Great Barrier Island and Ahuahu - Great Mercury Island. We've got this invasive species that's spreading like a lot of things we haven't seen before, so we really do need to take some concern over that because it's just going to make the gulf way worse than it currently is.

Just going through some of these main provisions of the bill, it's looking at establishing two new marine reserves, 12 high protection areas, and five seafloor protection areas. These measures seek to significantly enhance the conservation efforts, increasing the protected area from 6.7 percent to slightly above 18 percent of the gulf.

So to some of the clauses in the bill, and I think this is where the select committee will get into its debate about how we—if there are any changes to this—put the different needs of the different community groups in while we protect the gulf at the same time. Clause 10 is the one that establishes marine reserves over the areas that are described in Schedule 2 in the bill, and, in effect, they are really extensions of the existing marine reserves. Clause 14 prohibits various activities in seafloor protection areas, including aquaculture, dumping, dredging, trawling, and contacts with the seabed, and so there's definitely a need for that to go on in some areas of the gulf. Clause 18 bans various activities in high protection areas, including fishing, aquaculture, material removal, and dumping. So we would understand why there are some areas that are absolutely far more flush with biodiversity than others, and how we really do need to protect those areas.

Clause 19 through to 21 sets out some exemptions from the activities restricted by clauses 14, 15, and 18 within seafloor protection areas and high protection areas, and I would imagine that's probably going to be one of the topics of conversation that we're going to get a lot of submissions about when they open and when people come to select committee. The exemption I would imagine would be a highly discussed set of clauses in terms of everyone sees aspects of what's trying to be done from their own specific situation, and so there's going to be some, I think, great conversations around how that's going to work in the future.

Clause 21 provides for other general activities to which the prohibitions do not apply, including actions taken under enactments such as the Biosecurity Act 1993, all the Resource Management (Marine Pollution) Regulations 1998, training activities by the New Zealand Defence Force, emergencies, and transit shipping. So in creating an Act that is affecting something as big as the Hauraki Gulf, there are always other Acts that need to interact with it and everything needs to be built in to alignment, so there will be a bit of work that obviously needs to go on there.

Clauses 27 to 32 set out the process for obtaining a permit authorising a person to undertake a prohibited activity within a protected area, and the key elements of that process are that a person must apply to the Director-General of the Department of Conservation for a permit in a form approved by the director-general. The director-general may seek further information in relation to the application and must consider certain matters, and the director-general may approve the application if certain grounds are met, or decline the application at their discretion if it's not as they consider it to be. Clauses 35 to 40 relate to the monitoring and enforcement of the prohibitions in the protected areas because obviously whatever is put in place in law is going to have to be monitored.

In terms of the National Party's messaging around this bill today, it's that the bill won't pass in the current Parliament because, as most people know, this current Parliament will have its last day of sitting tomorrow. However, supporting the bill to the first reading gives us a good opportunity to test the stakeholder feedback and better understand the officials' rationale for implementing further consideration in the new Parliament.

The bill does not ban bottom trawling in the gulf; rather it is limiting trawling to trawl corridors. This is a key point of contention among environment NGOs such as Forest & Bird and Greenpeace. A complete ban in the gulf was viewed to impact the commercial fisheries sector unfairly and would move activity to other areas

near the gulf. Many New Zealanders have strong views on bottom trawling, so while there will presumably be many submissions in favour of the bill, there will also be many in favour of a complete ban on bottom trawling, spurred on by the NGOs.

National strongly believes that action will need to be taken to address the environmental decline of the gulf, so we strongly support the intent of the bill. National may want to look at changing the high protection areas—location, amount—based on submissions to the select committee, and any scientific input that has been done or will be done in the future.

So it is our pleasure to stand here in support of the bill, and we look forward to coming back in the next Parliament—hopefully, as Government—and working through this bill, making sure we take the consideration of everyone into account and get some runs on the board when it comes to the Hauraki Gulf and getting rid of some of those awful seaweeds and tidying the place up.

**Simon Watts:** Tidying up their mess.

**BARBARA KURIGER:** Yeah, absolutely—and cleaning up the mess. So thank you, Mr Speaker. I commend this bill to the House.

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**Hon RACHEL BROOKING (Minister for Oceans and Fisheries):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'm very happy to be here today talking about the Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill, and what a month August has been for the Hauraki Gulf. I know my colleague the Hon Willow Jean Prime and I have spent much time there. During that time, we've been talking to a range of stakeholders. Of course, tangata whenua have been very involved in the development of the thinking of how to do the best protections for the Hauraki Gulf. So too has the statutory body, the Hauraki Gulf Forum.

I was recently able to attend and speak at the *State of our Gulf* report, and, of course, it is not good news in the gulf. There needs to be a lot of work in there, and this is one of the many measures that's happening at the moment to do better in the gulf, and I'll talk about some of the other ones as well. I want to also acknowledge, of course, the Sea Change group that's really brought this range of methods that are needed in the Hauraki Gulf to the fore, and then the people involved with Revitalising the Gulf, which is the Government's response, and, of course, this bill and other measures are related to that.

Then industry: there are, of course, fishers who do fish and make their livelihood in this area. The marine park that's been around now for over 20 years is very large and extends well beyond Great Barrier Island. I think some people—and maybe I thought this initially—think that the area is really the area that you can see if you're in the Auckland CBD or around Waiheke Island, but, of course, it's much more expansive than that and it includes the Coromandel.

Of course, there are all the environmental groups. There are so many people who really care passionately about the gulf—about all of the parts of the gulf—and are doing amazing work. Just for an example there, when I was at the *State of our Gulf* report launch, I met people who had the word "*Caulerpa*" shaved into their hair—it was an interesting haircut, but it really goes to the passion of those people—and people were getting their diving licences because they want to see how it is that they can help with the removal of *Caulerpa*, which is a horrible biosecurity problem.

I'm very proud to be part of the Labour Government, which actually acts on biosecurity challenges, whether they are in the ocean or on our dairy farms. Of course, close to \$3 million has been spent on the management of *Caulerpa* and on understanding and trialling treatments. At one point, whilst we were in the gulf—well, not in the gulf; next to the gulf—we met some of the Californians that have been looking at suction dredging to determine if that's a useful tool in New Zealand, because it's complicated but it's a very important issue.

As well as these marine protected areas that this bill creates, 19 of them—very important. That's very important because marine protection strengthens biodiversity, and we need that resilience when facing climate change in particular.

I'm here speaking as the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries, and it was in 2020 that the title of that ministerial role got changed to include oceans in it, so that the focus is not just on fish stocks; it's looking more broadly at oceans. In that role, I've been very pleased this month to launch the fisheries plan for the Hauraki Gulf, and that is our first really ecosystems-based, location-based fisheries plan for an area. It includes many jobs to be done—they're in this plan—and it will have an annual report every year that will be more specific about exactly what needs to be done in the gulf, but it looks at a range of things. We've heard from the Minister talking about the issue of kina barrens and kina eating the seaweed, and the impacts that not having that seaweed makes for a whole lot of our juveniles in a range of species. So we don't get fish and other species in the gulf because of those ecological interactions, and it's really important that we're thinking about our marine environment in the whole.

Then, from midday today, people can join in the consultation on one of the actions from that fisheries plan that requires a separate statutory process; it requires regulation to be made on the trawl corridors in the gulf. So at the moment, bottom trawling is allowed in the gulf, except for 27 percent of the area, which is really in that inner area that I was talking about before that you can see from within the CBD. In looking to change that, there are four options which would ban trawling from between 74 percent and 89 percent of the gulf. That is a separate process, and I acknowledge the previous speaker Barbara Kuriger, for pointing that out.

So if people are interested in the bottom trawling, that requires regulation-making under the Fisheries Act and that consultation is open today. It's a significant change. The presumption is reversed from being able to trawl in the gulf except for 27 percent of the area, to not being able to trawl in the gulf, and in up to 89 percent it will be banned.

So I really have enjoyed working with the Minister of Conservation on this range of issues in the Hauraki Gulf. I note that this bill will go to the Environment Committee and that submissions will be over the election period, just as they will be for those trawl corridors as well, and I really ask people to make those thoughtful submissions on both topics. It's very important, and I commend the bill to the House.

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**SIMON WATTS (National—North Shore):** Well thank you very much, Mr Speaker. It is an absolute pleasure to rise to talk about the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana Marine Protection Bill. As the member of Parliament for North Shore in Auckland, the Hauraki Gulf is the significant and beautiful asset which my community look out to every day—an asset that sits very much at the heart of the other outer islands, including Waiheke and Great Barrier, then moving out into the beautiful Coromandel.

But many people in the North Shore, and many others that live in Auckland, enjoy the use of that gulf, whether it's swimming or kayaking or in their waka or recreational fishing or just simply walking on the beaches of the North Shore—my favourite beach, of course: Cheltenham Beach, if anyone's been there.

**Chlöe Swarbrick:** Let's ban bottom trawling, eh?

**SIMON WATTS:** I'm looking at the member of Auckland Central. I'm sure she's been around to that beautiful part of the world.

The National Party strongly supports actions and efforts in order to safeguard the Hauraki Gulf. What is frustrating is that this Government has had six years in order to take action, in order to make the improvements—with respect, which have been published in reports, many of which have been published many years ago—and only in the dying hours of this Parliament are we seeing legislation introduced in its final week in order to start making progress.

Well, I'm sorry. The derogation of the Hauraki Gulf is not new. The derogation of the Hauraki Gulf is well known, and the lack of action by this Government, I think, is testament to the fact that that will be one of the factors, when people go to the polls soon and consider, "We want a Government that will deliver true action and actions in this space."

**Chlöe Swarbrick:** So let's ban bottom trawling! Come on, Simon, you can do it!

**SIMON WATTS:** I think and I expect they will do that. I'm hearing the comments from the Green member who's actually in party with the Government on this policy. So it's not one to abdicate responsibility to say that there has been no action, because that party also has a much stronger influence than this side of the House on the current Government around getting legislation through.

But it is critically important that action is taken. This bill, in regards to dealing with some of the underlying issues, also misses a number of key and fundamental issues that are impacting the Hauraki Gulf. Sedimentation is one of the most significant factors that is impacting the Hauraki Gulf, yet that is not mentioned in this legislation in any degree. How can you do a piece of legislation in regards to protecting and enhancing the Hauraki Gulf when sedimentation is not even in your legislation? How can you put in place legislation in regards to one of the most significant issues, which is this *Caulerpa* seaweed virus found in 2021? We're nearly at the end of 2023.

This Government has sat on one of the most significant biosecurity issues in this country, one which has nearly decimated California and—in particular if you look at the European impact—decimated the aquacultural sector. Yet two-plus years on, we are still floundering in regards to taking the tangible action at the pace of change and the scale of change required in order to deal with that biosecurity issue. I tell you what, who is going to be responsible for having to tidy up that mess?

**Nicola Grigg:** That'll be us.

**SIMON WATTS:** That will be National because this Government has failed to take the action required on that. So you can talk a big game about protecting and safeguarding the gulf, but on your watch—on your watch, and those Ministers need to take accountability because it is on your watch—you have failed to take the action required. That problem, based on advice from experts, is already nearing a point at which the ability to get it under control is very much against our means. That is significant and should be a huge, significant issue—particularly for those younger generations that need to be able to enjoy that asset. Recently—

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Another issue is getting you back on the bill now, Mr Watts. You've had a pretty good run.

**SIMON WATTS:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The Hauraki Gulf marine protection bill is put in place in order to address the ongoing environmental decline in the gulf. Recently, research has been commissioned and published by the NZ Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) which indicates and calculates that the value and the annual flows of benefit from the gulf is in the region of \$5 billion per year—\$1.75 billion of that, actually, is included within the GDP of this country.

So the significant value that the gulf provides indicates why the importance of legislation in order to protect the gulf is so critical. If you look at the total asset value of the gulf—and I know it's difficult to put in, say, "How much is the gulf worth?" but if you were to undertake that analysis—the NZIER report indicated that the asset value of the gulf exceeds \$100 billion. And that is in a state in which it is already suffering from significant derogation around all aspects, in terms of the environmental impacts.

If we dealt with the environmental issues that are impacting that gulf, the gulf could be worth \$200 billion, couldn't it? It should be; that should be our ambition. We should be undertaking efforts in order to protect the environmental results of that gulf in order to improve our economy. Because, gee, have we got an issue with our economy? No one talks about that too much, but the economy is in a great state of chaos at the moment, and this gulf situation reinforces that.

We've talked a little bit about the release, also, by the Government in regards to bottom trawling. It's interesting that is something that's separate. I get that this isn't a new issue. It's not like all of a sudden we're woken up this morning and said, "Oh, maybe bottom trawling might be an issue in the gulf." No, of course not. It is an issue that has been around for a good amount of time. Again, six years by this Government—six years—and still a failure to deal with one of the underlying issues, or at least provide certainty to the sector and work with the industry in order to put in place the actions required.

I am pleased to see that some steps are being taken in that regard. But the pace of change has been snail pace, right? I'm talking the pace of a tortoise—

**Tama Potaka:** Sloth pace.

**SIMON WATTS:** If lucky, a sloth—remind me of that good movie with the sloths at the counter. Remember? It is a bit like that. It's about the pace, and sadly, though, this is a significant asset. But at least it's on the radar. But again, we need to move, and move concisely and with the industry and with stakeholders, in order to get certainty in that space.

I remember a little while back—and it wasn't that long ago—Jono Ridler, who was the swimmer that swam from Great Barrier to Campbell's Bay in my electorate, nearly a 100-kilometre swim—

**Tama Potaka:** Legend.

**SIMON WATTS:** What an absolute legend, as Tama Potaka referred to. I'd be struggling to swim 200 metres. I mean, the guy being able to swim that amount of time through the night, looking at weather conditions, was significant. He did that because he wanted to reinforce the importance of why we need to protect the Hauraki Gulf. He wanted to increase awareness of that in conjunction with Live Ocean Foundation, of the importance that we must take action. I think that should not be lost on us, that there are many, many individuals around this country—and particularly in Auckland and around the Coromandel—who live around the gulf, for whom the gulf is their backyard, it is their playground, it is their blue economy that supports them, that want and need and demand action.

I actually think this House is behind where public sentiment is on this issue. I think the public sentiment in regards to protecting the gulf is actually well in front of where this House is at, in terms of its understanding of the importance of taking action. I think it is incumbent upon this House and the next Government to take that and lead and move with the scale of pace and change required in order to put in place the actions that will protect it for future generations.

That's pretty much where we—National—are and we'll be strongly supporting this bill through to the select committee stage. We are obviously keen to see some of the components that we have talked about potentially be brought within the scope of this legislation, because it is important that we deal with all components that are impacting and holding us back from protecting the gulf. We will participate actively in regards to this conversation and we are pleased—on behalf of those communities that live around the gulf—that, at long last, we are starting to see some action. We hope that moves at pace following 14 October. We commend this bill to the House.

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**Dr ANAE NERU LEAVASA (Labour—Takanini):** Kia orana Madam Speaker. It is a pleasure to take a brief call on this Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill at first reading. I just want to say a huge thank you to the Minister of Conservation, the Hon Willow-Jean Prime, for bringing this through to the House but also for coming down to South Auckland and seeing the environmental things that we are doing, such as activities for our youth and protecting our environment there.

We know that our health and wellbeing is connected to our moana and it's connected to our whenua. So this bill helps to do so, in establishing 19 new marine protection areas that will nearly triple the protection in the gulf area from 6.7 percent to just over 18 percent. That's really good in terms of making sure that we are



protected for the generations. We've just had a classroom here up in the gallery, and it reminds me of the next generation who go and who are already seeing the Goat Island and the Great Barrier areas. We've had my son's classroom go and visit, and this is all about teaching it for the next generations. So I commend this bill to the House.

**SIMON COURT (ACT):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The ACT Party agrees there's a problem with the state of the Hauraki Gulf, and that's why we will be supporting this bill to select committee so that we can hear from submitters and the committee can carry out a full inquiry as to the nature of the problem and whether this bill will solve it.

So the nature of the problem, as described in the supporting documents for this bill, is that the gulf has declined significantly. Since the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park was established over 20 years ago, conditions have got worse. I attended a launch of the *State of our Gulf* report at the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron a few weeks ago, and we heard that in addition to overfishing and to reefs being damaged, some stocks like crayfish and snapper in many areas are becoming functionally extinct. There is also a problem of around 4,000 tonnes of additional nutrients entering the gulf from various sources such as rivers that discharge from agricultural land, and pollution from urban environments. Even though more and more money is being spent on wastewater infrastructure and cleaning up discharges, there is still an unacceptable number of wastewater overflows and raw sewage being discharged to the inner gulf on a regular basis.

So what does this bill propose in order to solve those problems? Well, it establishes some additional marine-protected areas and extends marine reserves such as Federal Cove, and you have to say that, OK, that's a good place to start. But when you actually look into the information in the bill, what does it do and how does it propose to do it? Well, it says there's a problem to solve with the degradation of the gulf: habitat loss, overfishing, pollution, sedimentation, and poor urban development. Well, when you look at the justification for this legislation, it says, actually, a lot of those problems can be solved with existing legislation, such as the Fisheries Act, which has provisions to make sure that fishing is managed in a sustainable way.

But what it says the Fisheries Act and the other legislation can't solve is this issue of discharges to the marine environment of marine sediments, mining, and other activities like sand extraction. Well, all of those activities are covered by resource consents. They're deemed to be necessary. They've passed—say, for example, dredging the Port of Auckland and dumping its sediments offshore, essentially on the very, very furthest edge of the Hauraki Gulf, is deemed acceptable because it balances the need to maintain an operating port against the impacts on the receiving environment, and those impacts have been accepted as less than minor. But this bill, potentially, would make it difficult or almost impossible to continue with dredging the North Island's largest port—most important port—which receives somewhere around 40 percent of all container traffic imported to New Zealand every year. It may very well make it impossible to get consent to do that in the future.

There are also places around the Hauraki Gulf where specialist sand products are extracted by dredging, because—take the City Rail Link tunnel, for example. The concrete used in that project is made from sand extracted from off the north-east coast of Auckland at Pakiri. Now, people might say, "Oh, well why do you need to get sand from the sea floor?" Well, it's a specific, hard, sharp sand that is excellent in making concrete—highly durable concrete. Unfortunately, because there is no other place where this sand is able to be recovered from—that's the only place it exists—that is where consents have been issued to carry out that activity. Now, many people might say you shouldn't carry out that activity; it's bad for the environment. And yet the Environment Court consenting authorities have accepted that the balance of environmental effects against economic and social benefits—actually, the environmental effects are less than minor. This legislation may well make it more difficult to get permits to do things that are absolutely vital for our economy.

And then I want to come to the supposed benefits that the bill intends to deliver, which is to restore parts of the Hauraki Gulf to a healthier state. There is nothing in the supporting information here which says how long this will take. When will we get these benefits? Because if more areas are excluded from recreational and

commercial fishing, if reefs around the Hauraki Gulf are protected—and it may well be that that is the method to achieve a restoration of the Hauraki Gulf's ecosystem—then, as an environmental scientist, I would want to know: what species are we looking to see recover? In what numbers? What biomass of fish? Where are the outcomes, the outputs, the measurements of when we will know whether this protection approach has been successful? Because otherwise, in the future, someone might say, "Well, you protected all these areas but the gulf hasn't improved." That's one of the problems with this piece of legislation: it doesn't say what the key performance indicators (KPIs) are, what the measurements are—how will we know?

**Chlöe Swarbrick:** Ecosystem protection.

**SIMON COURT:** Apparently, according to the member Chlöe Swarbrick, simply protecting the ecosystem is enough. Well, as far as the ACT Party and most New Zealanders are concerned, passing laws simply so you can say you've done something or protected or banned something is insufficient. We must know that the laws that are passed and the regulations that are implemented will actually result in the benefits that are simply assumed by this legislation.

So that is why ACT believes this bill should go to select committee and should be subject to further interrogation. Not only is it unclear when the benefits of a recovered ecosystem might occur, how they're being measured, there's also something else that has really, greatly concerned a lot of New Zealanders—that the biodiversity and ecological outcomes actually won't be negotiated with scientists. But in the supporting information for this bill, it says that while customary rights to fish—which are due to iwi because of Treaty settlements—will be upheld, the ecological objectives and outcomes for these marine protected areas won't be negotiated with scientists; won't be negotiated with Auckland Council, for example, which controls land use in a lot of areas around the gulf. They will only be negotiated with Māori, and many New Zealanders would have some concern that if we're going to focus on scientific and ecological objectives, why is it that only one group in New Zealand will be given the opportunity to say whether they agree with it or not rather than scientists, ecologists, or marine biologists, for example? It doesn't seem to be, on the face of it, a sensible way to approach marine protection to improve the environment.

The bill also references the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011, and that it's important that the bill navigates around the rights and interests of iwi and hapū with respect to the foreshore and seabed. Well, that is important. However, the ACT Party would want to point out that while that Act restores rights and interests to Māori that were denied by the Labour Government at the time—in fact, denied in such a way that led to Tariana Turia leaving Labour to form the Māori Party—there are some problems with the way the Takutai Moana Act has been implemented and decisions resulting from it, which are making it harder to build wharves, coastal protection seawalls, because of the need to obtain cultural reports and permissions.

So while this bill proposes to improve the state of the Hauraki Gulf, actually, it now opens up for discussion, through referral to select committee, the opportunity to examine a whole lot of other matters that impact on the Hauraki Gulf, and on Aucklanders' and the other provinces', like the Waikato and Northland's, ability to actually grow our economies and deliver better outcomes for people in those regions. So the ACT Party will support this bill with reservations.

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**Hon EUGENIE SAGE (Green):** Tēnā koe. E mihi ana, Ranginui rāua ko Papatūānuku, tēnā kōrua. E mihi ana, Tangaroa, tēnā koe.

*[Thank you. I acknowledge Ranginui and Papatūānuku, greetings. I acknowledge Tangaroa, greetings.]*

I'm delighted to speak on the Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill. But can I first acknowledge the passing of kaumātua James Brown, Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki, Ngāti Pāoa, and Ngāti Porou, and send aroha and condolences to Debbie and his wider whānau. James Brown was a true rangatira: charismatic, fierce, and always a champion for Ngai Tai ki Tāmaki. The case that Ngai Tai ki Tāmaki took as far as the Supreme Court is

now a landmark for how the Treaty of Waitangi should be implemented under the Conservation Act, by Te Papa Atawhai. That concerned, of course, Motutapu and Rangitoto, and the concessions which were issued there. Moe mai rā, e te rangatira.

*[Rest in peace, noble leader.]*

So the Hauraki Gulf, Tikapa Moana, Te Moananui-ā-Toi, is one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most valued and heavily used coastal areas. It has sustained people, culture, identity, and mana whenua for generations. He taonga tuku iho—treasure passed down through the generations. It once had flourishing shellfish—kūtai, scallop beds—over thousands of hectares, which helped ensure that the water was clean and provided kai. It was a food basket. It contained some of the earliest areas settled by Māori. It's critically important to Māori, and it's critically important to New Zealanders. That's why the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park was established 23 years ago.

This bill will help restore some of the health to the Hauraki Gulf through marine protection, because it has been a taonga in trouble for some time. We've seen the three-yearly reports that the Hauraki Gulf Forum puts out, which have been unflinching in their description of the health of the gulf. The fact that our fish species—fish like snapper, crayfish—kōura—have declined by over 56 percent, and seabirds by some 67 percent; the gulf is not flourishing. On land, there have been enormous efforts to get rid of predators and to safeguard shorebirds and seabird nesting sites, on some dozens of sites in the Hauraki Gulf. But you go beneath the water and it is a very different story. The decline in those big numbers of snapper and of hāpuka—of groper—those big fish with the jaws that can crush kina, has led to the kina barrens.

I really hope that the Environment Committee will be invited by the Neureuter family trust to Ōtata, which my colleague Chlöe Swarbrick and I had the privilege of visiting, to see what has been achieved on land there, where wētāpunga have been reintroduced, where there's been work to protect the seabirds, but you have the kina barrens just offshore.

I'd really like to acknowledge the work of people like the Neureuter family trust; the Hauraki Gulf Forum, its former chairs Pippa Coom and Moana Tamaariki-Pohe, its current chair, Nicola MacDonald, and its chief executive, Alex Rogers; all of the community organisations and environmental groups, Forest & Bird, Greenpeace, World Wildlife Fund, and LegaSea; mana whenua like Ngāti Pāoa who have put rāhui in place around Waiheke Island, supported by Chlöe Swarbrick, to make an initiative to try and restore the health of the gulf. The work that has been done to reintroduce kūtai—mussels—so that those shellfish beds on the seabed get re-established. And they've had to contend with some of the biosecurity issues and obstacles that the Ministry of Primary Industries has in place.

There's been enormous public and community concern about Tikapa Moana. This bill is a response to that. As the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries, Rachel Brooking—the response there, to limit bottom trawling, is also a response to the public pressure. I do agree with Simon Watts that Government is way behind public opinion here, but this bill is a great step forward. It's long overdue.

Marine reserves, which are designed to protect our nature from extractive uses to help recovery of fish stocks, as the Cape Rodney-Okakari Point Marine Reserve has shown, have been enormously successful in helping kōura and snapper and other species rebuild. But they only cover less than 1 percent of the gulf. So the extensions of Leigh and Te Whanga-nui-o-Hei / Cathedral Cove, are very welcome; so is the establishment of the new high-protection areas—12 of them—including one around Ōtata, the Noises, and five seafloor protection areas, where some fishing is still allowed.

This bill goes back to Sea Change, which started under a former National Government, admittedly, in 2013, but did not get progressed much until last term, when we took it off the shelf. Sea Change, and the community organisations that were involved in that, wanted to reduce the impact of activities on land—things like subdivision, land development, and farming, so that you reduce the nutrient pollution and you reduce the sediment pollution. It's interesting that National has criticised but not recognised that it's been the Resource

Management Act and the natural and built environment legislation which are the key tools to reducing the impacts of those activities on land. Sea Change was about recognising and protecting cultural values, restoring depleted fish stocks and benthic habitats, protecting representative marine habitats, and promoting some economic development while ensuring that marine environments are restored.

Then, we had Revitalising the Gulf, which the Greens didn't think went far enough. But that had themes of kaitiakitanga and guardianship, of replenishing mahinga kai—fish stocks—again, of ki uta ki tai—from the mountains to the sea—ensuring that what we did on land was connected with our oceans and ensured healthy oceans, and kotahitanga—everyone working together. I really acknowledge the work of the Hauraki Gulf Forum for promoting that ethos of kotahitanga.

We've had a major crash in fish stocks; we've had a major decline and loss of seabirds. So the protected areas that this bill provides for are a small step forward. Several of them are located next to the cable protection zone, which, at the moment, is the major protected area in the Hauraki Gulf, because it prevents fishing so that they don't get tangled up with the submarine cables.

I hope that the Environment Committee is not inundated by submissions from recreational or commercial fishers seeking to reduce the size of those protected areas but, instead, by submissions seeking to extend them. As part of the process of developing this bill, Martin Jenkins did a report in August 2022 which showed that fishing in the proposed protected areas accounted for 2 percent to 3.5 percent of the total revenue generated by permit holders across all quota management areas that included the Hauraki Gulf, and that the total impact on GDP for establishing these protected areas would be between \$4.2 million and \$4.9 million in the October fishing year. That is tiny in terms of the overall value of the gulf. This is the bare minimum, in this bill, of what is needed to establish marine protection. We have seen a separate consultation-exercise around bottom trawling. All four options being proposed by Government provide for bottom trawling to continue. Public opinion and sentiment is that bottom trawling should end so that we can have the restoration of those benthic habitats, which fishing gear damages and destroys.

So we've got to go much further. I really hope that Chlöe Swarbrick is re-elected, as a very energetic MP for Auckland Central and the Hauraki Gulf, to continue to work with communities, with the Green Party next term, to champion further mahi and further initiatives to restore this taonga of Tikapa Moana / Hauraki Gulf - Te Moananui-ā-Toi, to full health. This bill is a start, but I hope, too, that the select committee actually gets to visit places like Ōtata so that they can see for themselves.

Scientists have been hugely involved in all of these efforts for protection. Auckland Museum has a whole team involved in studies around Ōtata. So the ACT Party's contribution was incoherent in just assuming that science wasn't involved. And National and ACT are supporting it only to select committee. So we need a Labour - Green - Te Paati Māori Government to ensure that we go further faster, and measures like this don't get overturned. Kia ora.

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**HELEN WHITE (Labour):** This bill is going to protect three times more of the Hauraki Gulf, and it's part of a big plan to put in a whole enduring way of managing an area that has not been managed, including when I was a child. I remember going and staying out at Rakino Island, and it had been stripped bare. It didn't have many trees on it. And what you get in those situations is the sediment from the ground going into the water and destroying the quality of the seabed, so you don't get the seaweed in those situations. So this piece of legislation fits in with a whole plan around revitalising our gulf. That includes things like the Natural and Built Environment Act, which means that you're not going to get the same runoff from development as has been the case in the past. My tour visited the Noises, and it is really sad to go out and see the barrenness of that seabed around that area, which is actually next to Rakino Island, which I was speaking about.

This has implications not just for the suburbs of Auckland closest to the sea, and it's not just for Waiheke islanders; this has implications for Auckland. It means places like Mount Albert will be different because the sea in the inner harbour will be different—but all of Auckland really needs this area. This is our jewel—this is

our absolute jewel—and it makes up one of the most beautiful places in the country, and I commend this bill to the House.

**ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Poto Williams):** I understand this is a split call. Simon O'Connor—five minutes.

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**SIMON O'CONNOR (National—Tāmaki):** As long as it's not a split personality on my behalf, we'll be doing OK. We are very pleased to support this bill, the Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill. It's a good step forward. But there is already public debate on whether it goes far enough, and this is the great thing about the select committee process, which is about—well, it won't happen this side of the election, but the other side—a really important opportunity for people with a variety of views to be heard. That's the importance of this democratic process and the select committee that's about to start. I certainly encourage locals in my electorate of Tāmaki to submit on this bill, because they represent a range of views. Obviously, there are many, many more people than simply my electorate, but already as this bill's come before the House, it doesn't matter if it's those with customary rights or even fishers and even some who have commercial interests—they are already writing to me with their thoughts. So my encouragement to them is to submit to the select committee process.

I've referenced my electorate a couple of times and people know it. It's all the eastern bays, in effect, so everything from Okahu Bay right round to Karaka Bay and so forth. It touches, obviously, only a fraction, a small part, of the gulf but the gulf is such an important part of our electorate. I live in St Heliers, and that's where I go to swim and to walk. It's a beautiful place. Mission Bay, of course, is one of the great places that people from all over—not only Auckland but New Zealand—come to visit, and a big part of it is the Hauraki Gulf.

But we also know—and it's the whole point of this bill—that the gulf is under enormous pressure, and, as the local MP there, it's something I want to see change. I just realised that was a pun and also a reference to one of the lobby groups. There we go, but we do want to see change. I suppose one of the elements is whether this bill is going far enough. I don't know. My own personal feeling is I would like to see the likes of bottom trawling and so forth go completely. However, I also understand somewhat where the Government's coming from. It's the squeezed balloon concept. If you do stop it, where does it go next? But I am confident that we are smart enough as a Parliament to address that. And one of the things I've often wondered about for a while is why we don't just buy out the quotas of those commercial fishers. I don't know how much it costs. I think it would be great to flush that out in select committee, but it's well past time that we protect this incredible asset, and, as I say, I'd like to see bottom trawling and the like go.

But I think there are also some signs of hope. They are small and particular aspects, and I want to be really clear to the House and those listening that I don't see these local examples as fixing the entire gulf, by any means—there's just a small hint. I reference St Heliers, where I live. If you go for a swim or you see the tide at low tide you will see the re-flourishing of the seagrasses and so forth. That's a positive sign. Now, that again is not an argument to not do more but it's a positive sign of what can happen. But for me the most positive is actually Okahu Bay. One of the things, when I got elected, was that I was so keen to see all those boats moored there removed and that bay returned to the people, and it's something that particularly Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei wanted. It would be wonderful to see that bay cleared, but really importantly too, through local iwi—I'm not sure what the right word is; it's not dumping. But they've placed hundreds of thousands of mussels back into the bay, and already it's making a tremendous difference.

So, for me, it's just a hint of what actually cooperation across all New Zealanders working with mana whenua and others can do. So perhaps it's not really a message of hope; it's just a hope of mine that we can take a little bit of inspiration from the good work that is already happening in our communities and we can have that flow through this piece of legislation to see our gulf protected fully, and I know that will be a challenge to all parties across the House but it's something that we should be aiming for. With that, I'm pleased to support this bill.

**LEMAUGA LYDIA SOSENE (Labour):** Talofa, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and take a short call on the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana Marine Protection Bill. There have been, in support of this bill, many speakers who have highlighted the critical work that this bill brings forward, particularly around the restoration and health in Māori in terms of what it proposes, the 19 new marine protection areas. It's critical to Tāmaki-makau-rau because it's such a huge taonga that we see every day. So, in particular, I wanted to acknowledge all of those involved in bringing this kaupapa forward, and also the Ministers who have been very passionate in describing and the work that they've done on the ground to meet with the environmental groups and also hear the call of mana whenua. It's important, much-needed marine protection work.

The bill, just very quickly, provides two new marine reserves, five seafloor protection areas, and 12 new high protection areas. I just wanted to acknowledge the thousands who have submitted to get it to this point, because over 60 percent supported the current proposals. It is intended that the Department of Conservation and all of the mana whenua and all of the groups will work together. I commend this bill to the House.

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**ANGIE WARREN-CLARK (Labour):** Tēnā koe, Madam Speaker—I'm delighted to speak on this bill. Those of you in this House will know that I am a mad keen fisherwoman and, in fact, have been fishing all my life. I have fished in, on, and under the Hauraki Gulf, I have taught my child, and my children to snorkel using Goat Island. I have absolutely enjoyed the benefits of this beautiful place.

We need to protect the Hauraki Gulf, we need to take care of this taonga; we need to do it for so many reasons. I am just absolutely delighted that this is the beginning of a significant piece of work that will make the Hauraki Gulf much healthier. I think that across this House people have suggested all sorts of things about the Hauraki Gulf. What I want to say is that our community needs to commit to having a further say. I want to ask all those fishers—the recreational, the cultural, and the commercial fishers—to have a say about this bill. It is so incredibly important that we get it right and that we move to an ecosystems management system. I commend this bill to the House.

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**Hon SCOTT SIMPSON (National—Coromandel):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Look, I've been listening with close attention to the speeches in this debate, because there are some things in politics and the body politic of our Parliament and, indeed, our society that are, in many respects, above the mere day-to-day cut and thrust of the rough and tumble of political debate in the Parliament and in society. The way that we care for and look after and protect and enhance, for future generations, the Hauraki Gulf, I think, is one of those areas where there should be more unanimity and commonality of thought and spirit than often there is.

I've got the pleasure and honour of being the member of Parliament for Coromandel. It is, I think, the electorate that has the longest coastal boundary around the Hauraki Gulf. It goes from the Auckland side of the Firth of Thames, Miranda, Kaiaua, around the base of the firth, up the Thames coast, around the top at Colville and Port Jackson, Port Charles, down the eastern seaboard of the Coromandel Peninsula, past Whangamatā, down to Waihi. Now, many people have a mental picture of Hauraki Gulf as somehow finishing at the top of the Coromandel Peninsula. It's a common misconception; it actually moves around the eastern seaboard of the peninsula, and that is an important part of the gulf area.

All the environmental indicators relating to the gulf deteriorating are not in dispute. That is not contested in any way, shape, or form. The science is undeniable, the data is undeniable: the gulf is in a rapidly degrading position. And that's simply not acceptable to us as current New Zealanders and our current generation; it's not acceptable for the future that we would want to have for generations that will follow us, both in this place and as users and recreators and people who want to enjoy the beauty of the gulf.

Now, that said, this piece of legislation, as my colleagues in the National Party have already indicated, we're going to support it. We supported it at first reading. We do so primarily to encourage submitters to let us hear what they have to say. We want to know what the NGOs have to say, and we want to know what the recreational, the cultural, and the commercial fishers have to say about the proposals that are established in

this bill, because it's not perfect: there are some enormous challenges yet to confront, and there are some challenges that are going to mean that there will be angst and conflict and heartache for some people who are used to having done things in the gulf, on the gulf, and under the gulf for generations. But change is required, and that is going to require some give and some take, from pretty much everybody that engages and interacts with the gulf in whatever way, shape, or form that they currently do. But change is required.

So as the member of Parliament for Coromandel, I want to hear, for instance, from recreational fishers, particularly those who are feeling very concerned about the potential for highly protected areas to be established around the Aldermen Islands, for instance, for the extension of marine reserves, and the impacts that might have on what they see as their recreational rights, privileges, and traditional opportunities to fish recreationally on that side of the peninsula. And I know that many of them are very exercised, but I want them to channel that energy into making submissions to the select committee.

Now, this piece of legislation won't pass in this Parliament. We have only one more day of sitting before the Parliament is dissolved and this Parliament ceases to be, and the new Parliament will be formed after the general election in October, and it will be up to the new Environment Committee and the new Parliament and the new Government to decide what actions are taken in regard to this piece of legislation—whether it's going to be modified, amended, changed, or whatever. So that is a challenge for the next Parliament and the next Environment Committee to grapple with.

But these are meaty, weighty, heavy, gnarly issues that require considered opinion, that require the use of science and data and information rather than just emotional gut instinctive responses that may not necessarily be well founded in science or data. So this piece of legislation we are supporting—but we want to hear from, and engagement from, as wide a range of people, organisations, stakeholders, and people who are interested in the gulf.

Now, the gulf is acknowledged widely as being the most intensely recreated piece of marine space in our entire marine area, in our exclusive economic zone, for that matter—our entire territorial marine space. It is an emotional piece of water that is held dear to so many New Zealanders, but we want to make sure that this piece of legislation, combined with the announcement that the Government, in its dying, gasping last few days, has made earlier this week in relation to bottom trawling and the various options that are proposed for it—we want to make sure that, actually, they're not just moving an issue from one part of the gulf to another part of the gulf. And I want to explain a little bit about that. Because of the options that the Government has presented for consultation in terms of bottom trawling, it seems to me, on first glance, that, actually, all that does, potentially, is remove bottom trawling from the inner parts of the gulf and then potentially push out that practice to other areas of the gulf, and that would mean, by definition, particularly around the eastern seaboard of the Coromandel Peninsula. Now, if that's the case, then that simply is not acceptable. That simply is not acceptable to people from the Coromandel or people who want to visit and take the opportunity to fish around the Coromandel. That is just moving one problem to another part of the gulf, because the law of unintended consequences kicks in and that will be something that I think will actually have a detrimental effect and a negative, perverse outcome, rather than solving anything that is going to be long-term beneficial.

And then, when combined with the potential for more commercial activity in the outer part of the gulf—because the inner part of the gulf has been closed off, so to speak, to bottom trawling, under the options that the Government is proposing—that then adds further interest and weight to issues relating to the marine protected areas; the highly protected areas, the marine reserves that are going to be extended, and so forth. It's a double whammy for those people who have a particular focus on the eastern seaboard of the Coromandel Peninsula, and I don't think this Government has really given any due consideration to those aspects, and I don't think that they have given thought or consideration beyond what happens at the top of the Coromandel Peninsula and what happens on the eastern seaboard. I would urge them to take those views into account carefully, because those people do have opinions, strong opinions, and I'm very happy to represent those opinions in this House, and will continue to do so.

So this is a subject that is complicated and has a myriad of issues to address and confront, many of which, actually, are related to what happens on the land, as much as what happens in the marine space: issues of sedimentation, biodiversity degradation, the diminishing of seabird numbers, whale, and dolphin numbers around the gulf. These are matters that are highly important and valuable to so many New Zealanders and so many people who use and recreate and enjoy the gulf. And to simply push out from the inner gulf to an outer gulf situation—I don't think solves the problem. I think it requires a far more detailed thought process, and after six years, for this Government to be, finally, in its dying gasping days of administration, just throwing this piece of legislation out, I think is, frankly, a massive cop out. But there you go.

We're going to support it to select committee, we want to engage with people, we want to hear what they have to say, and my invitation to people not only on the eastern seaboard of the Coromandel Peninsula but other parts of my beautiful electorate—and, indeed, other people who have an interest from wherever they may be in relation to the Hauraki Gulf—is that I want to hear from them and the National Party wants to hear from them. So we endorse this piece of legislation, with reservations.

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**DAN ROSEWARNE (Labour):** It's a pleasure to take this last call on this important bill. We support this bill because we know that the Hauraki Gulf is unwell and that we need to restore its health and vitality and mauri as well, so our children's children can continue to enjoy it well into the future. It's also good for tourism, and Angie Warren-Clark, my colleague, highlighted how she enjoys the Hauraki Gulf. That's important for our tourism industry so that we can attract those tourists and get them to enjoy the Hauraki Gulf, just like the locals do.

So this is an important bill. It adds to the long-term sustainability of the Hauraki Gulf, and I commend it to the House.

**Motion agreed to.**

Bill read a first time.

**ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Poto Williams):** The question is, *That the Hauraki Gulf / Tikapa Moana Marine Protection Bill be considered by the Environment Committee.*

Motion agreed to.

Bill referred to the Environment Committee.

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