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Media Release

EDS responds to Minister's criticisms

EDS has responded to “combative” comments by Environment Minister Amy Adams earlier today regarding the Society’s criticisms of the proposed changes to the Resource Management Act.

“The Minister says that we are scaremongering and that core environmental protections “will, in many cases, be strengthened by the government’s proposals.”

“Well we disagree strongly. The proposed changes to sections 6 and 7 of the Act, especially the introduction of new economic development objectives, will weaken, not strengthen environmental protections,” said EDS Chairman Gary Taylor.

“That’s deeply worrying. If it’s not the government’s intention to do that, fine. Changes can be made once the consultation period is complete. By all means let’s strengthen environmental protections.

“What we don’t like are proposals to give Ministers much greater powers to insert provisions directly into council plans and to take more decision-making away from them without due process. The Environment Court is an important check on excesses and needs to be retained in the process.

“Further, it’s misleading of the Minister to characterise our position as being opposed to improvements in the efficiency of RMA processes. EDS specifically supports process improvements and tighter consenting timelines as well as enhanced guidance to councils.

“There are many improvements that can be made to the RMA that would make it work better, not just for developers, but for everyone.

“We note that our concerns have been reinforced by comments by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, Dr Jan Wright, who said that the RMA is “not an economic development act.”

“We think that a direct dialogue with the Minister is the best way forward,” Mr Taylor concluded.