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Mr S. Macaskill
Chairman
Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11 646
WELLINGTON

File: 30 1/60/ 11
JHB: JMS
basiselection

11 August 2000

Dear Sir

REVIEW OF BASIS OF ELECTION

The Upper Hutt City Council resolved at its meeting held on Wednesday 9 August 2000 to make a submission on the Regional Council's Review of Membership and Basis of Election.

The Council submitted at the time of the last review that it considered that two members would give it much more effective representation and that the current one member situation significantly disadvantages Upper Hutt compared to most other constituencies.

In reconsidering the issues this time, the Council remains **firmly** of the same view, notwithstanding the 1998 ruling from the Local Government Commission. The Regional Council itself comments in the Discussion Paper that *"it is therefore highly desirable that each constituency elects at least two Councillors to enable one to participate exclusively in regulatory matters with another to concentrate in other areas of the Council's responsibility."*

Given the agreement that there appears to be across both Councils on this matter, the limiting factor in implementing the principle is clearly the cap on regional council membership imposed by the Local Government 1974.

The Upper Hutt City Council strongly considers that the Wellington Regional Council should make submissions to the Minister of Local Government for a change in legislation, which would allow each region to determine an appropriate representative structure for its own area.

While understanding the current statutory constraints, the Upper Hutt City Council still feels strongly that while it remains a single member constituency, it lacks a real say in regional affairs and in the absence of any immediate likely legislative change, seeks a change in the current mechanism used to determine membership.


The importance of the need for a minimum of two members per constituency should not be understated and it is considered that this should form a base level of representation, with weightings for land area, NECV and population laid on top. If this were done, only Wellington and Lower Hutt would have more than two members, with three each. While this would reflect as unfair based on population, or a strict weighting formula, it would take account of the wide diversity which exists across the region in the delivery and use of Wellington Regional Council services.

We believe that the formula based approach cannot adequately reflect the extent to which the weightings between land, population and NECV vary across the constituencies, depending on the particular service under consideration. The Regional Council states in its Discussion Document that “*the Council's functions and services are largely to land and only indirectly to residents*”. While we agree with this principle, the formula is still heavily weighted in favour of population and has resulted in over-representation for heavily urbanised areas such as Wellington. The ten percent allocated to land area does not fairly reflect the importance of resource management issues to communities such as Upper Hutt. In addition the concept of using a purely land area measurement basis for this factor is not the best way to determine representational fairness for such services as river control or forestry, which, while they are services “*largely to land*”, are not necessarily proportional to the land area itself.

The Local Government Act, in specifying the factors to be considered, requires the Council to achieve “fair” representation, having regard to population, and if the -circumstances so require, **rateable** values, areas or other relevant characteristics of the various constituencies. We believe this gives the Council room to address this issue in a more flexible way than the strict application of a formula.

The Upper Hutt City Council believes that the current methodology is detrimental to Upper Hutt and that every effort should be made by the Regional Council to remedy the situation, by increasing the number of members for Upper Hutt to two.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Max Pedersen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Max Pedersen
CHIEF EXECUTIVE