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Alpine Recreation Ltd
Founded in 1981 by
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To:

The Commissioners hearing the applications for 110 resource consents to take, use and discharge water, in the Upper Waitaki Catchment.

I oppose all of the above resource consents.

To take more than 164 million cubic metres of water from high country rivers and lakes, to irrigate more than 27,000 hectares of public and private land in the Mackenzie Basin, is both environmentally and socially unacceptable. Use of such volumes of water over such a distinctive landscape would have significant detrimental impacts:

1) On hydro resources: A very significant proportion of New Zealand's renewable power comes from the Mackenzie lakes. Competing uses of significant amounts of water should not be allowed to threaten this valuable resource, which is of benefit to all New Zealanders. The inevitable warming of our climate should compel us to boost and wisely use our renewable sources of power not diminish them!

2) On tourism: Many of our tourists have told us that the landscape they were most impressed with in all of New Zealand, was the Mackenzie Basin. The scenery appealed to them more than Milford Sound, more than Queenstown and the Remarkables because it had a wild, undeveloped and untamed feel to it. The sight of unnatural green pastures over vast areas would "domesticate" and destroy the natural feel of this unique, tawny tussock-land. Our own Prime Minister, John Key recently spoke about the significant contribution that tourism provides to the country's GDP. If we act as responsible guardians of our natural environment, that industry will thrive and continue to contribute to the GDP. If the Mackenzie country is transformed into a vast corporate dairy farm, not only will the effects be irreversible, but we also will 'kill the golden goose'.

3) On water quality and quantity: If consents for such volumes of water were granted, our lake levels, river levels and water purity would inevitably be affected and any future clean up could cost millions of dollars. These consents will provide water for dairying in areas that would not otherwise support it naturally – this cannot be a

sustainable and efficient use of water. Locals and tourists alike value highly the opportunities for fishing, swimming, kayaking and boating in the clean waterways of the Mackenzie. These clean waterways and the diverse ecosystems that they support, rely on 'natural' flows, flushes and floods to remain healthy. Extracting such massive volumes of water from these water bodies will greatly jeopardize these ecosystems and the rivers' vitality.

4) On New Zealand's reputation: Whether it's the "clean and green" image our exporters try to capitalize on, or the "100% pure" campaign of the Tourism Board, New Zealand is already earning skepticism in off-shore markets, because it is failing to live up to its marketing promises. Greening the Mackenzie and encouraging the spread of dairying in an area that is naturally dry, will very quickly see New Zealand incur massive demerit points when tourists return home to tell the true tale of New Zealand. The vast majority of tourists coming to New Zealand, travel through the Mackenzie Country - a highly visible area with a unique, lasting visual impact.

Resource consent should not be granted for such unsustainable water and land use. Only a few stand to directly benefit from these consents in comparison to the benefit reaped by all New Zealanders through sustainable power use and maintenance of a good environmental image for both tourism and exports.

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