

Appendix 1: Recommended amendments to provisions – Climate Change – Agricultural Emissions

Policy CC.5: ~~Avoid increases in Reducing~~ agricultural greenhouse gas emissions¹ – regional plans

Regional plans shall include objectives, policies, ~~rules~~ and/or methods to ~~support reductions in agricultural greenhouse gas emissions from 2019 levels to contribute to the Objective CC.3 2050 net-zero emissions target. ~~avoid changes to land use activities and/or management practices that result in an increase, in gross greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture.~~~~

Explanation: As agriculture is the second largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the Wellington Region, contributing 34 percent of the region's *greenhouse gas emissions*, reducing emissions from the agricultural sector is critical to contribute to achieving Objective CC.3. While central government is taking the lead on the policy approach to reduce agricultural *greenhouse gas emissions* ~~through the use of a pricing mechanism (the Emissions Trading Scheme), Policy CC.5 seeks to complement this by directing regional plans to include provisions to support reductions in agricultural emissions. This will be supported by non-regulatory Policy CC.15 and Method CC.8 that seek to support change and improved management practices at a farm level to reduce *greenhouse gas emissions*. ~~this policy sets a minimum expectation that there should be no increase in agricultural greenhouse gas emissions in the Wellington Region.~~~~

As of 30 November 2022, regional councils are able ~~to make rules~~ to control the discharge of greenhouse gases having regard to the effects on climate change. ~~This policy is intended to provide flexibility as to how agricultural greenhouse gas emissions are reduced through a future regional plan change process which A-plan change process will determine the way in which Policy CC.5 is given effect to and will need to consider issues such as equity and the relationship with the national pricing approach for agricultural greenhouse gas emissions to ensure that these are complementary.~~

Policy CC.15: ~~Managing agricultural gross greenhouse gas emissions – consideration~~

~~When considering an application for a resource consent, associated with a change in intensity or type of agricultural land use, particular regard shall be given to:~~

- ~~(a) reducing gross greenhouse gas emissions as a priority where practicable, and~~
- ~~(b) where it is not practicable to reduce gross greenhouse gas emissions, achieving a net reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and~~

¹ Note the Climate Change – General Section 42A Report recommends a new definition of 'greenhouse gas emissions' to replace the two separate definitions of 'greenhouse gases' and 'emissions' proposed in Change 1.

(c) avoiding any increase in gross greenhouse gas emissions.

Explanation: As agriculture is the second largest emitter of GHG in the region, contributing 34 percent of the region's GHG emissions, reducing emissions from this sector is critical to contribute to achieving Objective CC.3. As of 30 November 2022, consent authorities may have regard to the effects of discharges into air of greenhouse gases on climate change in considering an application for a discharge permit or coastal permit. Where resource consent is required in association with a change in land use intensity or type of agricultural land use, the policy requires a hierarchy of effort, seeking to reduce gross greenhouse gas emissions in the first instance, followed by achieving a net reduction, with a minimum expectation that any increase in gross emissions is avoided.

Policy CC.15: Improve rural resilience to climate change – non-regulatory

Support rural communities in their climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, including by:

- (a) providing practical and easily accessible information on climate change projections at a local level,
- (b) promoting and supporting land management practices and/or land uses that improve resilience to climate change, including nature-based solutions,
- (c) promoting and supporting land management practices and/or land uses that will reduce gross greenhouse gas emissions,
- (d) giving preference to climate change efforts that also deliver benefits for indigenous biodiversity, land, fresh and coastal water.

Explanation: This policy promotes and supports low emission agriculture and increased rural resilience to climate change.

Method CC.5: **Confirm Review regional response to reducing agricultural greenhouse gas emissions**

Monitor changes in agricultural land use and land management practices and review the regional policy approach by 31 December 2024, Wellington Regional Council confirm the preferred option to implement Policy CC.5, taking into account changes in agricultural land use and land management practices, responding to any predicted changes in greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector in the Wellington Region, regulatory and non-regulatory responses, and relevant any new national policy direction and initiatives.

Method CC.8: Programme to support low-emissions and climate-resilient agriculture-non-regulatory methods

By June 2024, develop and start implementing a targeted climate change extension programme, with mana whenua/tangata whenua and relevant stakeholders, to actively promote and support changes to reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and increase rural land use resilience to climate change, including by:

- (a) providing practical and easily accessible information on projected climate change impacts at a local level,

- (b) providing base data held by the regional council to support the development of farm *greenhouse gas emission* profiles.
- (c) promoting and supporting actions to reduce agricultural ~~gross~~ *greenhouse gas emissions* and/or increase climate resilience.
- (d) identifying appropriate areas and species for tree planting/natural regeneration in farm plans as part of implementing the regional spatial forest plan (see Method CC.4).
- (e) identifying other on-farm nature-based solutions that will increase the resilience of a farm system and/or catchment to the effects of climate change.
and
- (f) supporting central government and industry climate change programmes/initiatives.

Implementation: Wellington Regional Council