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MEDIA RELEASE

Crown Manager welcomes next step in Wairoa Flood Mitigation Project

Crown Manager, Lawrence Yule, has welcomed the Hawke's Bay Regional Council's decision to support the progression of Option 1C, with the next step in the project being the further refinement of the profile and alignment of the proposed floodway to ensure the best possible flood mitigation solution for the people of Wairoa.

"Today's decision by the Regional Council confirming Option 1C as the preferred flood mitigation option was made on the basis that a number of important steps can occur first.

"From the outset, we've made it clear our shared kaupapa for this project is about finding the best possible technically viable solution that minimises negative impacts on whānau, their land and homes and protects marae, urupā and cultural taonga in the process.

"At today's hui, we made it clear that we intend to continue to refine the profile and alignment of the floodway proposed as part of Option 1C and reiterated that now is the perfect opportunity for this optimisation to occur in a way that further minimise the potential impacts to owners of whenua Māori, whānau, home and landowners where possible.

"There is no question further refinement needs to happen, and it needs to happen at pace, in order to ensure we can continue engaging with impacted landowners to further progress discussions around land access."

Mr Yule recognised the deep emotion present in today's hui in discussing what is one of the most significant projects the Wairoa community has seen in decades.

"I want to acknowledge the speakers at today's hui, including representatives from mana whenua, Wairoa District Council, Tātau Tātau o Te Wairoa Trust and Hawke's Bay Regional Council. The carefully considered positions of all involved will remain critical as we continue to work together to help safeguard the resilience and wellbeing of the community of Wairoa.

"I also want to acknowledge people of Wairoa who have so willingly come together in pursuit of this shared outcome, particularly those whose homes and land may be impacted by what's being proposed. There is still a lot to be done, and we appreciate the way the whānau continue to engage with us."

Whilst today's hui was significant step forward for the project, it in no way undermines the importance of continued conversations with mana whenua and the wider Wairoa community, Mr Yule says.

“We’ve been talking about flood mitigation in Wairoa for some time now, and we’ve said all along that this is about working together, doing whatever we can to help ensure the safety of the community for generations to come.

“There is still a huge amount of work ahead for us all, and our priority remains on working closely with potentially impacted whānau, home and landowners, and the wider Wairoa community, to deliver much-needed flood mitigation for Wairoa.”

ENDS

For more information, contact:

Hannah Heberley

hannah@hhcomms.co.nz or 021 272 8021