Conservation Board Support

Nelson Marlborough Conservancy

Department of Conservation

186 Bridge St

Nelson

Dear xxxx.

 I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed talc magnetite mine in the cobb valley. I am aware that the access permit being considered is not publically notified and I am aware that there is no mechanism for public consultation, however I am writing to try to highlight some significant issues detailed and not detailed in the applicants resource consent application and supporting documents which I imagine that have been provided to you as an elaboration of the proposed project.

**Endemism / habitat destruction**

Firstly I would like to emphasise that this area is one of the highest rates of endemism in New Zealand, This is largely due to is the presence of the Talc Magnisite itself and the very properties it is being removed because it possesses. Due to the thermal properties of this rock and its protrusion above the canopy and its aspect it gathers considerable heat during the day. Kaka are said to frequent this area in the evenings due to its warmth. It is inaccurate to represent this area as nothing more than an extension of the greater area surrounding it as it has special characteristics (thermal and toxicity) that have led to the ecosystems upon it adapting.

**At risk / Declining Species Present**

To trade off an intact ecosystem containing so many species which are recognized as at risk or declining is unacceptable to me. The benefits are largely to one family plus a very limited amount of workers due to the operation being so highly mechanized. The Costs are to all of us.

**Flora**

* Pittosporum dallii
* Notothlaspi australe
* Peraxilla tetrapetala
* Carex devia
* Chionochloa defracta
* Colobanthus aff. wallii “serpentine”
* Dracophyllum ophioliticum
* Hebe albicans
* Korthalsella salicornioides
* Myosotis brockiei
* Nematocerus aff. trilobum “Rimutaka”
* Uncinia viridis
* Cardamine “magnesite”

**Fauna**

* -Kea,
* Kaka,
* Riflemen,
* Rock Wren,
* Bush Falcon,
* short tailed Bat,
* long tailed bat,
* Green Gecko,
* Forest Gecko
* Powelliphanta snails
* Possibly kiwi

**Concerns over the wildlife survey**

I contest that the wildlife survey represents an accurate representation of the Fauna existing on the site. Insufficient visits across an insufficient proportion of the year over insufficient years will lead to insufficient data that will not represent a complete assessment of the birdlife especially. I contest that this area is probably a habitat for greater spotted kiwi given the acceptance of this being the case across the valley at the visitor information station.

**Concerns over changes to the consent conditions**

In the applicant’s documentation and application he states that there is around 300 million tonnes of recoverable Steatite in the permit area. He also states that he intends no more than 1666 truck movements per year each carrying 9 tonnes of material. The application is for 38 years. The total volume that this equates to is 569,772 tonnes total. This is approximately 0.18% of the material that surveying suggests exists in these outcrops. I have concerns that the resource consent will be amended and the consent conditions changed over time as the project gets underway.

**One chance to use this Material**

This steatite ‘lens’ is the only source of magnesium in new Zealand. Once it is gone it is gone and this does not appear to be a use of it that justifies the destruction of habitat and impacts on the special place. If we allow this steatite to be hewed from the hillside and shipped to Europe to make fireplaces and benchtops we are making a decision that we will never require a domestic source of Magnesium.

**Rehabilitation**

I do not believe ‘rehabilitation’ is possible. The habitat and associated life is dependent on the material to be removed. The applicant includes the following application in it’s resource consent application “Conducting rehabilitation trials” - this implies they do not have a clear idea of how this can be accomplished

**Tourism Impacts**

For many people with limited mobility the Cobb represents the only local area where they can experience the Kahurangi with the drive up the cobb road. The impact on their experience from the volume of trucks and associated vehicles will destroy their experience of this unique environment. This is likely to have impacts on the local economy as I expect visitor numbers to drop as some people will come to the Golden Bay to experience the Cobb as vehicle constricted visitors.

**Road Safety issues**

Selwyn Steedman – transportation mgr at TDC has said that no improvements will be made to the road and a levy will be charged per truck movement for ‘maintenence’ This road is far to narrow and windy to accommodate trucks of this size at the frequency indicated – N.B truck movements are twice applicants stated figures as empty trucks must return for another load. This road is clearly too narrow to accommodate this volume of heavy traffic. I visited the permit area two weeks ago and felt that I would be in a very bad situation