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‘A Howl Of A Protest’ is organised by *Groundswell NZ*, a grassroots rural movement. Farmers and growers will be joined by industry support people, tradesmen, contractors and councils in the unprecedented nationwide demonstration.

Together with our families, and with a sense of absolute urgency, we make the following requests to Government as a stake in the ground:

1. The **National Policy Statement on Freshwater** must be scrapped. Setting and attaining freshwater guidelines should be the jurisdiction of catchment groups, in association with regional councils. The Pomahaka catchment group is proof this approach works.
2. Big-stick regulations for **Significant Natural Areas** such as wetlands and landscapes must be abandoned or re-written immediately, with funding redirected to proven systems like the *QEII National Trust*. More than 180,000 hectares of private land has already been placed in protection by landowners in partnership with the trust. This approach works. Voluntarily placing land in trust gives landowners a sense of pride; they will look after it well. Being forced into it means the opposite. We see the proposed Government regulations regarding significant natural areas as a land grab. Private property rights must be protected.
3. The **National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity** should be scrapped. This policy punishes the landowners who have already been proactive in conservation, turns biodiversity into a liability, and wastes millions of dollars on tick-box significance assessments. Councils should be able to work with and support the many landowner initiatives such as landcare & catchment groups and the QEII National Trust. It is essential to protect landowners’ private property rights.
4. **Seasonal rural workers from overseas** should be prioritised through MIQ: we urgently need rural contractors, horticulturalists, dairy farmers and fruit-pickers. The rural sector is doing the heavy-lifting for the NZ economy, now more than ever, and the mental strain on farmers and growers, of continuous long hours and product loss, is becoming unbearable. Government must stop calling these workers ‘unskilled labour’ and instead refer to them as skilled manual labourers. That’s what they are. These people harvest kiwifruit and apples expertly, with no bruising, allowing the fruit to be exported into high-value markets with certainty. Just because people do not tick the box for degrees does not mean they are not critical to the NZ export machine.

5. The **NZ Emissions Trading Scheme** is seeing large areas of farmland incentivised into pines and a significant cost-burden borne by the world's most emissions-efficient farmers. The unworkable elements of climate-change policy which are crucifying farmers and growers must be withdrawn.
6. High country legislation – the **Crown Pastoral Land Reform Bill** – is another big-stick layer of regulation being applied to our high-country farmers, over and above existing council regulations. This unnecessary burden must be lifted. We do not know a single high-country farmer who is not passionate about his environment.
7. The 'Ute tax', or the Government's **Clean Car Package** rebate scheme, must be scrapped as soon as possible. There is no electric alternative to the ute – a vehicle which is essential to New Zealand's economic heavy-lifters: farmers, horticulturalists, industry support people and tradesmen. If there is no alternative, the policy is clearly unworkable and merely another financial burden.

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