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## Submission on APP-2020203133.00 – Resource Consent, Discharge to Air, Bio Plant Manawatū NZ Limited.

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### Overview:

- Our submission relates to the **whole** application.
- We **oppose** this application.
- We want the Horizons Regional Council to **decline** this application.
- We wish to be heard in support of our submission.
- We would consider being part of any pre-hearing meeting.

### Background:

Environment Network Manawatu (ENM) is the environment hub for the Manawatū Region with the key purpose of facilitating and enabling communication, cooperation, and increasing collective action amongst its member groups and the wider community. ENM provides leadership by underpinning, fostering, and encouraging environmental initiatives in the region and our 60 current member groups are from throughout the Manawatū River Catchment with interests including biodiversity regeneration, freshwater management, citizen science, food security and resilience, sustainable living, alternative energies, and active transport. The

network is organised into two collective focus areas: Manawatū Food Action Network and Manawatū River Source to Sea.

ENM's constitutional purposes are to:

- coordinate and communicate the efforts of the member groups to enhance the local environment:
  - actively protect, maintain, restore and enhance the environment of the Manawatū
  - promote ideas to the wider community to encourage them to participate in environmental projects
  - develop concerted long-term plans of action to enhance the environment and actively progress the implementation of these plans
  - encourage the provision of “green” areas for passive recreation
  - work together to identify, initiate, support, implement and maintain environmental projects that benefit the wider community
  - initiate, develop, implement and participate in environmental education
- act as a central point of access to environmental information.
- advocate for ecological sustainability and matters of agreed environmental significance.
- work in partnership with iwi to recognise kaitiakitanga and environmental aims and objectives in common.
- liaise with similar organisations elsewhere in Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world as appropriate to source and share ideas for environmental projects and issues.

ENM also supports the submission to Horizons Regional Council from Feilding Against Incineration Committee and Awahuri Forest Kitchener Park Trust.

## Submission:

### **Significance of the Bio Plant application**

Aotearoa New Zealand does not have any Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) pyrolysis facilities (nor any Waste-to-Energy facility of any type designed to process MSW). Very few pyrolysis plants of this nature (using MSW as feedstock) are operating in Europe and the United States.

Bio Plant has no waste or resource recovery operations nor any experience in the waste sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. Adopting overseas pyrolysis models that are implemented in contexts significantly different to that of Aotearoa New Zealand must be approached with caution. As a technology still under development, MSW pyrolysis relies upon a strong regulatory environment, including real time environmental emissions monitoring, to ensure operational safety and compliance. This is experimental technology and there is insufficient data to ascertain its safety. Few territorial authorities have the capacity, technical knowledge, or regulatory framework in place to ensure safe operation of such facilities.

We are concerned that Bio Plant has exaggerated the benefits and toned down the risks of their proposal to the extent that several of their central environmental claims are inaccurate and

misleading and amount to 'greenwashing', resulting in the risks and environmental effects of the proposed facility misleading the community.

**Our objections to the application:**

Bio Plant's proposal does not align with our constitutional purposes, as outlined below:

1. Working in partnership with iwi:
  - Aorangi Marae Trust object to the proposal.
  
2. Advocacy for ecological sustainability:
  - The effects of emissions of carcinogenic dioxins and furans, particulate matter, wastewater and odour on the local community and environment.
  - The contribution of additional CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere.
  - The creation of hazardous waste where none exists in the feedstock and the linear approach for dealing with hard-to-manage resources at the end of their useful life.

We discuss each of these matters below.

**1. Working in partnership with iwi.**

Aorangi marae is the marae for Tahuriwakanui hapū of Ngāti Kauwhata. It is the marae closest to the proposed Bio Plant pyrolysis facility. We understand, from the Feilding Against Incineration public meeting held on 10 March 2022 that Aorangi Marae Trustees, who manage the marae, were neither informed nor consulted about this application, and do not support it.

**2. Advocacy for ecological sustainability.**

*Discharge of contaminants to air*

We are concerned about the emission of dioxins to the air. Bio Plant identified at their public meeting on 9 March that they are not able to remove all dioxins. We are aware that dioxins are cancer-causing even at extremely low levels.

We are also concerned that:

- The PDP technical report on Bio Plant's application indicates that (section 9.2 Combustion Emissions) the methodology that is used to determine the levels of emissions of polluting gases is:
  - Not standard practice in New Zealand; and
  - "may not represent the worst case scenario".
- The PDP technical report uses an inappropriate and unrelated air quality standard on dioxins (from Texas, United States) to claim that these dioxin levels are safe.

### *Odour*

- The Bio Plant application (page 11) states *“The addition of the BPMNZ plant within the Resource Recovery area and neighbouring wastewater treatment sites is considered to have no additional or adverse effects on the neighbouring residents.”* There are already adverse effects, specifically odour, on the neighbouring residents from these facilities, and the addition of any further odour and emissions, however small, will add to those effects.
- There are residential houses within 500 metres of the proposed site.
- The PDP technical report says (section 7.2) that the Air Dispersal Study was *“based on monitoring at an Australian site that handles MSW.”* The data relating to odour is not specific to a pyrolysis facility. Instead, generic data relating to a *“facility that handles MSW in Australia”* is used.

### *Climate change*

- The government has introduced policies to reduce petrol, and diesel vehicles in Aotearoa New Zealand, to reduce the use of coal for heating or power generation and encourage the move to cleaner energy sources. Allowing a pyrolysis plant to generate 14,000 litres per day of diesel that is dirtier than petroleum-based diesel, directly works against Aotearoa New Zealand’s efforts to decarbonise the energy sector.
- Bio Plant misinterprets the carbon calculations in their resource consent application. Firstly, they assume the entire quantity of municipal solid waste (MSW) they are diverting from landfill would otherwise produce methane. However, only organic materials produce methane in landfill – plastics and other synthetic materials do not (the fossil carbon is effectively sequestered in landfill). Furthermore, Bonny Glen landfill, which receives MSW from the Manawatū, has a methane gas capture system. While such systems are not particularly efficient, they do significantly reduce landfill methane emissions (estimated to be around 68% over their lifetime). Secondly, and more significantly, Bio Plant’s greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting does not account for any Scope 3 emissions (including the burning of the fuel produced by the facility, any additional truck movements, embodied emissions in the products used to build the facility and maintain operations, and more. We contend that an independent calculation of GHG emissions should be completed, and that it should include Scope 3 emissions.

### *Toxic Char and other toxic by-products*

- The Bio Plant facility would produce 2.5 tonnes/day of residual char. Residual char from pyrolysis of mixed solid waste normally contains significant toxins due to the known additives in the plastic feedstock.
- The application states any residual char will be disposed to suitably approved landfills. 2.5 tonnes per day of residual char is a significant amount of waste to be dealt with by landfills approved to take toxic waste, what would happen if the char was deemed to be too toxic for the landfills? Or if landfills could not take the volume of toxic waste?

- The Bio Plant application provides no details on where its filters and scrubbers would go at the end of their service, and if they would require special handling.

### General Comments:

- Currently, Aotearoa New Zealand has no MSW incinerators/pyrolysis plants. Pyrolysis is not a technology in widespread use for MSW anywhere in the world and Feilding does not want to be a testing ground for this technology.
- Feilding would become a net waste importer. In 2020-2021, the Manawatū Region sent 7,101 tonnes of rubbish to landfill. This is approximately 19 tonnes/per day. The Bio Plant application would allow for up to 70 tonnes of wet waste per day to be processed. This means, at minimum, Bio Plant could import up to 51 tonnes of additional waste into the community per day. So not only would Feilding be a guinea pig for the process of burning our local rubbish, Feilding would be exposed to toxic emissions related to the burning of other regions' rubbish.
- A pyrolysis plant will take Aotearoa New Zealand in the opposite direction to zero waste. It removes incentives for waste minimisation by offering a false 'solution' to the waste problem.
- Adopting a zero-waste strategy for the community would fit with the Horizons Regional Council One Plan to minimise waste, while meeting community aspirations for a healthy environment, job creation and mitigation of climate emissions.
- A 'solution' such as pyrolysis is out of step with current directions and does not fit with current policies locally, nationally or globally.
- The resource consent application does not align with Manawatū District Council's Waste Management and Minimisation Plan, and statutory responsibilities outlined in their Environmental Stocktake.
- The resource consent application does not align with Horizon's Regional Council One Plan, specifically:
  - 3-8 – Cleanfills, composting and other waste-reduction activities;
  - 3-9 – Landfill management; and
  - 3-10 – Responsibilities for the management of hazardous substances.

A pyrolysis plant does not contribute to waste reduction activities and increases the volume of hazardous waste for Horizon's Regional Council to manage and dispose of.

- Just this month Aotearoa New Zealand was signatory to a mandate to draw up a global treaty to break free from plastics. This treaty will be drawn up within the next two years and will be legally binding worldwide. Less plastics production will significantly reduce the feedstock available for a pyrolysis plant.
- The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) have released the National Plastics Action Plan (NPAP) for Aotearoa New Zealand. The work in the NPAP is already well underway, including

phasing out single-use and hard-to-recycle plastic items and introducing regulated product stewardship for six waste streams. This will significantly reduce the waste that would previously have gone to landfill and will reduce the feedstock available for a pyrolysis plant.

- MfE is currently reviewing the Waste Minimisation Act (WMA) and the Litter Act because they are no longer fit-for purpose and are not driving the changes needed to achieve a circular economy. Along with changes to legislation, MfE is also developing a national waste strategy, increasing and expanding the waste levy, collecting better data and information, and increasing capacity and capability in compliance, monitoring and enforcement. Granting consent for a pyrolysis plant prior to this review being completed may be in the interests of Bioplant but is definitely not in the interests of Aotearoa New Zealand, and specifically, not in the interests of Manawatū District residents.