



Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ (Inc)

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10 December 2009

Rt Hon John Key
Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism
Parliament House
WELLINGTON

Dear Prime Minister,

I write on behalf of our 13, 000 members of Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand to express our opposition in the strongest terms to your Government's Review of Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act, and the threat to increase mining activity on lands managed by the Department of Conservation, including National Parks.

Federated Mountain Clubs represent some 13, 000 members in approximately 100 tramping and climbing clubs throughout New Zealand. Its primary objectives are to promote tramping, climbing, mountaineering skiing, hunting and snow sports in the mountains of New Zealand. An associated objective is the conservation of all mountain districts in New Zealand and to retain the conservation values of these lands in perpetuity.

As Minister of Tourism you will be aware that our National Parks and Conservation Parks are highly valued areas for recreation by hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders. The internationally renowned world heritage areas attract millions of tourists every year, generating almost half of the country's overseas revenue. Further our international tourism industry has expanded steadily - despite cyclical recessions that have impacted our economy over the past half century.

Reviewing your party's record, we applaud National's commitment to developing the New Zealand national park system, particularly its sponsorship of the National Parks Act in 1952 and the consistency of National governments in expanding and protecting national parks. Along with many New Zealanders, members of the Federated Mountain Clubs welcomed the National Government sponsored passage of Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act in 1997 to protect areas of high conservation value from mining.

However, we deplore the apparent change of tack by your National government. Any change of current policies to expand mining on conservation lands for the benefit of narrow private sector interests would be a retrograde step. It would damage New Zealand's international standing in conservation and recreation management, and domestically it would be widely opposed.

Federated Mountain Clubs therefore calls on your Government to:

- Confirm its commitment to protect the integrity of the New Zealand's publicly owned national parks system.
- Reject any proposals which may arise from the review of the Crown Minerals Act that propose mining in New Zealand's national parks and conservation parks.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and key ministers to discuss productive ways in which your government could better manage conservation lands for the benefit of all New Zealanders.

Yours sincerely

Rob Mitchell
President

cc

Hon Gerry Brownlee, Minister of Energy & Resources
Hon Tim Groser, Minister of Conservation
Hon Kate Wilkinson, Associate Minister of Conservation