



'Watered down' coastal hazards will stay on LIMs despite scientific advice

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ALDEN WILLIAMS/FAIRFAX NZ

Residents are campaigning for the Christchurch City Council to remove coastal hazards information from land reports affecting areas such as Lyttelton Harbour.

A Christchurch City councillor says controversial coastal flooding and erosion information will not be removed from Land Information Memorandum (LIM) reports.

Burwood-Pegasus ward councillor David East said the Council would re-word the relevant section of LIMs, but there would be "no change at all really" for concerned property owners.

He would not reveal the exact wording and said he had been "directed" not to reveal any information from the draft submission, which would be before council next Thursday.

"I'm going to exercise my own opinion on this matter."

The Tonkin & Taylor report, released in July 2015, identified 6000 Christchurch properties that could be susceptible to erosion and nearly 18,000 at risk of coastal inundation over the next 50 to 100 years.

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Christchurch Coastal Residents United (CCRU) has been fighting to get the information taken off LIM reports since they were changed last year to reflect the potential risk of flooding or erosion as identified in a controversial Tonkin & Taylor report.

Residents questioned the science behind the report and were concerned the LIM notations would affect property values and future insurance coverage.

A panel of scientific experts has told the council the information should be removed because maps used to identify at risk properties could be "legally unsound" and should be put to one side until new ones are completed.

East said coastal hazard mapping lines was "the big issue" for Christchurch's coastal community.

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"I actually wanted to move a recommendation that the chief executive be directed to remove the information off LIMs. But the legal staff came back and said no, it's the chief executive's job to do that."

He said the law dictated the council must reveal the information that it had about properties on LIMs.

"What I can't countenance is when we go to all the expense of having a peer review panel, doing all this work, they've come back with recommendations that we should remove things off LIMs, we should engage in a lot more science to make the report more robust.

"But we still want to hang on to all this information on LIMs when it's been questioned."

A council spokeswoman said councillors had not been presented with the final report and it would be inappropriate for the council to comment.

CCRU spokesman Darrell Latham said the council had not consulted with residents.

"It's not good enough. The mayor and the CEO essentially have failed in their duty of care to Christchurch ratepayers by surreptitiously bringing in this policy."

He said other local bodies such as Kapiti Coast District Council had voluntarily removed coastal hazard provisions from LIM reports.

"Other councils in a similar situation where they have been technically challenged have done the right thing by their ratepayers and have removed the notations off the LIMs. Tweaking the wording but leaving the notations on the LIMs notifications exposes the [Christchurch City Council] to legal liability.

"One has to ask why the council would go through the process of having the Tonkin and Taylor report peer reviewed by an expert panel of scientist and then not take their full advice."

He called for Prime Minister John Key to intervene on behalf of Christchurch ratepayers.

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