

*under:* the Resource Management Act 1991

*in the matter of:* Applications by Sanford Limited to change the conditions of various resource consents that authorise the farming of salmon in Big Glory Bay, Stewart Island

*by:* **Sanford Limited**  
*Applicant*

## Summary of evidence by Dr Philip Hunter Mitchell on behalf of Sanford Limited

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Dated: 25 March 2019

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REFERENCE: J M Appleyard (jo.appleyard@chapmantripp.com)  
A Hill (amy.hill@chapmantripp.com)

**Chapman Tripp**  
T: +64 3 353 4130  
F: +64 3 365 4587

60 Cashel Street  
PO Box 2510, Christchurch 8140  
New Zealand

www.chapmantripp.com  
Auckland, Wellington,  
Christchurch



**SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE BY DR PHILIP HUNTER MITCHELL ON  
BEHALF OF SANFORD LIMITED**

- 1 My full name is Philip Hunter Mitchell.
- 2 My qualifications and experience, and agreement to comply with the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses are set out in my primary statement of evidence.
- 3 I have prepared two statements of evidence for this hearing – my primary statement, dated 11 March 2019 and my supplementary statement (which addresses the Commissioners' Second Direction regarding monitoring conditions), dated 19 March 2019.
- 4 By way of summary:
  - 4.1 Big Glory Bay is the only area in Stewart Island where aquaculture can occur.
  - 4.2 As Dr James has explained, there is also little overlap between the farms in Big Glory Bay and any critical marine mammal habitats, nor is Big Glory Bay an ecologically significant area for seabirds. Big Glory Bay is not within an "outstanding natural landscape", nor is it assessed as being an area of "outstanding natural character".
  - 4.3 Based on technical assessments undertaken by others, this proposal seeks to increase the "nitrogen in feed cap" in Big Glory Bay from 483 tonnes per annum to 659 tonnes per annum and, in so doing, increase the amount of nitrogen in feed that can be used at each individual farm site.
  - 4.4 The applications do not seek to increase the consented area of any farm.
  - 4.5 Based on Dr Harstein's modelling, nitrogen in feed limits for salmon farm sites MF 246 and Li 320 are proposed to be increased to 412.6 and 200.6 tonnes per annum, respectively, subject to various environmental standards, as described in the proposed conditions, being satisfied.
  - 4.6 Increased nitrogen in feed limits have not been set for other farms (because it requires modelling of a very large number of scenarios) and the proposed conditions provide for this modelling to be undertaken in the future, using the same methodology as has been used in these applications, and for the efficacy of that process to be certified by Environment Southland.
  - 4.7 Having considered the statutory planning documents and the evidence of the various technical experts, it is my opinion that the proposal is consistent with the outcomes sought by the statutory

planning documents, a conclusion which the section 42A report also reaches.

- 5 In respect of proposed conditions:
  - 5.1 The version provided by Ms Appleyard during her opening reflect the changes set out in my supplementary evidence – those having been made in response to the Commissioners’ Second Direction - such that the monitoring requirements are now explicitly included within the conditions, rather than being left to a “Management Plan”.
  - 5.2 The increased nitrogen in feed cap is to be implemented in two stages, with the second stage not able to proceed until specified criteria have been satisfied.
  - 5.3 There are various water quality objectives, water quality standards and seabed standards that are to be achieved.
  - 5.4 Monitoring data is to be analysed and reported to Environment Southland and Te Rūnanga o Awarua.
  - 5.5 An “Environmental Management Plan” is to be prepared that is, amongst other things, required to set out the procedures to be undertaken to ensure compliance with the conditions of consent, together with various operational details.
  - 5.6 A “Technology Update Report” is to be prepared every three years to evaluate new developments in salmon farming technology and farm management practices that may reduce the deposition of material on the seafloor, assess the associated benefits, and assess the feasibility of adopting them, including financial implications.
  - 5.7 Comprehensive review conditions are included.
  - 5.8 The proposal is precautionary, in that any adverse effects are reversible and the consents expire in less than 6 years’ time.
- 6 My conclusions remain as set out in my primary statement, these being:
  - 6.1 In my opinion the proposal offers the opportunity for increased salmon production and operational flexibility, while protecting the Big Glory Bay environment. Aquaculture, including salmon farming in Big Glory Bay is a keystone industry for Stewart Island and the proposal will assist in it continuing to fulfil this role in the future.
  - 6.2 A substantial effort has gone into developing the proposed conditions with very helpful input from the Council, submitters and their respective advisors, such that they will ensure that effects of the activity are acceptable, and that there are suitably robust

mechanisms in place to identify and address any unexpected effects which might potentially occur.

6.3 I have also concluded that the proposal will be consistent with the outcomes sought in the relevant objectives and policies of the planning documents.

6.4 In my opinion I can see no planning impediment to granting consent to this application, subject to the imposition of the proposed conditions proffered.

7 I am happy to answer any questions from the Panel.