Friends of Regional Parks Incorporated

PO Box 60203

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His Worship The Mayor Len Brown

Auckland Council CEO Stephen Town

cc Editor NZ Herald

Wednesday 16 September 2015

Dear Mayor Len Brown,

**RE: VEHICLES ON BEACHES**

This weekend saw a terrible tragedy take place on Muriwai Beach with the loss of the lives of 4 young men. The Friends of Regional Parks wish to express our sincere condolences to the families and friends of the victims.

A tragedy like this should never be allowed to happen again on our beaches. The Friends of Regional Parks would like to request that Auckland Council takes immediate action to limit vehicle use on Muriwai Beach to those used for boat launching in approved areas, surf patrols and emergency services. Council should urgently review the use of vehicles on all other beaches in the Region. The greatly increased availability and use of four wheel drive vehicles and off road motorcycles means that what may have been acceptable fifty years ago is no longer safe or acceptable.

Our Regional Parks, and in particular our beaches, should be places for family recreation where it is safe to enjoy our outstanding and special environment without the intrusion of motor vehicles. The continued growth of Auckland places immense pressure onto our Regional Parks, and conflicts between user groups will only increase.

Avoiding future tragedies such as this needs to be a high priority for the Council in managing these spaces on behalf of the whole community. There are more appropriate places for 4WD recreation such as Woodhill Forest, where vehicles are separated from other users and activity is more closely supervised to ensure a safer experience for everyone.

We sincerely hope that Auckland Council will act quickly to ensure our beaches remain the safe and unspoiled taonga that we all treasure.

Yours sincerely

Bill Burrill

Chair, Friends of Regional Parks Incorporated