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Sad time for Lake Horowhenua

Russel Norman MP

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It is disastrous the edge of Lake Horowhenua is still being polluted by sewage, with high levels of e.coli found in official tests between council sewage ponds and Lake Horowhenua after the treatment plant overflowed recently.

Horizons Regional Council tests have shown high levels of e.coli in groundwater and the "wetter area between the sewage treatment plant and lake", according to information the Green Party has obtained under the Official Information Act.

"I'm disappointed Horowhenua District Council Mayor Brendan Duffy and chief executive David Ward have constantly downplayed risks, caused by council prioritising \$10.4 million on a huge new council building instead of on waste disposal," Green Party Co-Leader Russel Norman says.

"After I issued a statement on Aug 10 headed 'Threat of sewage discharge into Lake Horowhenua' the Mayor attacked me and said I was 'completely out of order and 'ill-informed'. Over the years, he has made similar criticisms of others who have criticised his waste practices."

Dr Norman met a group of Mānupoko iwi on Friday near the lake. They were deeply upset they were not forewarned by the council of the overflow nor consulted before Mr Duffy's staff built two huge make-shift ponds on paddocks outside the plant to try to contain the partly-treated sewage.

"It was a privilege to meet this group who have ownership rights to the lake and surrounds going back hundreds of years and have been fighting council pollution policies for more than 50 years.

"They said Horowhenua District Council did not seek consent from them nor the regional council before building the make-shift ponds on reserve land. The regional council has confirmed the lack of consent.

"It's about time Horowhenua District Council, which has the slogan 'The Nature Coast' started regarding local waterways as the taonga they really are. It's about time there was a Mayor who started listening to generations of Mānupoko and other iwi who value the lake and its outfall Hokio Stream as important eel fisheries and the mouth of the stream for shellfish.

"It's about time the environment stopped being the loser whenever the council wants posh council buildings and the like."

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