Submission of the Port Underwood Association in respect of the proposed changes to the Freedom Camping Bylaw.

The Port Underwood Association (the Association) thanks the Marlborough District Council for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Freedom Camping Bylaw. The Association’s comments are limited to the Port Underwood area, specifically the areas along and adjacent to the Port Underwood Road and Tumbledown Bay Road.

**Current provision of campsites**

The Association notes that there are currently campsites on Department of Conservation sites at Rarangi, Whites Bay, Robin Hood Bay and Whatamango Bay. There are, therefore, campsites available within a reasonable distance of anywhere in Port Underwood; areas that can be accessed by road in Port Underwood are all within 20 km of a campsite.

The site at Robin Hood Bay is within the Port Underwood area and provides an extensive camping area that is well used, but does not appear (to the members) to be overcrowded even in peak times. For the majority of the summer months there appears to be relatively few users of the site that stay overnight.

Accordingly, the Association submits that there is no need for any relaxation of the freedom camping restrictions in Port Underwood.

**Extension of the prohibition**

The Association notes that the draft by-law retains the prohibition of freedom camping on the length of Queen Charlotte Drive and the full length of all Kenepuru Sound Roads (on the formed road, the road reserve and on the road verges). The Association believes that the nature of the Port Underwood and Tumbledown Bay Roads (narrow carriageway, limited or no road reserve, restricted verges, frequent significant or precipitous drop offs and close proximity to the foreshore reserve) provides a reasonable rational for both the Port Underwood Road and Tumbledown Bay Road to also be designated in Schedule (1). This is to prohibit freedom camping throughout Port Underwood (other than on the DOC campsite at Robin Hood Bay). The rational for this comes partly from safety issues based on the physical terrain as noted above and the current practice of freedom campers to trespass onto private land because of the limited camping space throughout much of the Port as a result of the physical terrain. A notice of prohibited camping except at Rarangi, White’s Bay, Robinhood Bay, and Whatamonga Bay would remove the expectation of freedom campers that any other space would be available and therefore reduce the temptation to camp on private or otherwise prohibited land before they arrive in the Port Underwood area.

John Davison

Chairman Port Underwood Association

Address for Service:

PO Box 59, Blenheim, 7240.

port.underwood.association@gmail.com