

# Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

We are reviewing and updating our current District Plan – looking ahead to the next 10 to 15 years. The Kaipara District Plan is essentially the ‘rule book’, which is applied to manage development, activities and the environment within the district.

The District Plan influences the future shape and feel of our district, which is why it’s important for Kaipara communities to be informed and get involved. Its purpose is to protect our environment, historic locations and cultural tāonga for future generations, through sustainable management of our resources, while supporting our communities to develop and grow.

We’re seeking input on our initial draft ahead of the statutory process, scheduled to commence in mid-2023. This Draft District Plan does not have any ‘legal weight’ and the Operative District Plan must continue to be relied upon.

## A Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) is an animal, plant, or micro-organism whose DNA has been genetically altered in a way that does not occur naturally using engineering techniques.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) may significantly affect people, our environment, and economy. There is little information or scientific evidence about the effects of GMOs. The effect of GMOs could be significant and irreversible if they are not controlled.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for approving field trials in New Zealand under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996. A High Court Appeal case (Federated Farmers of New Zealand Inc. v Northland Regional Council [2016] NZHC 2036) that questioned whether councils (both regional and district) had jurisdiction to manage GMOs concluded that councils

do have jurisdiction and can include provisions in their regional and district plans.

Our neighbouring territorial authorities (Far North District Council, Whangarei District Council and Auckland Council) have adopted an adaptive precautionary approach to managing the risks of outdoor use, storage, cultivation, harvesting, processing, or transportation of GMOs. Some activities such as research within contained facilities, some veterinary vaccines and certain medical applications are permitted.

Kaipara District Council is yet to adopt provisions for managing GMOs.

### What are we proposing?

We are proposing new provisions for GMOs in the Draft District Plan which have been previously tested by other councils.

The proposed provisions take a precautionary approach to prohibit the release of any GMOs to prevent any uncertain effects on natural resources and ecosystems, and because the risk in some cases could be irreversible.

**Do GMOs pose a risk to my property or health and wellbeing?**

The Draft District Plan provisions propose to require resource consent for GMO field trials and genetically modified veterinary vaccines following approval by the EPA but prohibits the outdoor release of GMOs.



## Summary

- New provisions for GMOs are to be included in the Draft District Plan and will align Kaipara District Council with the other three northern councils.
- The provisions take a precautionary approach to prohibit the release of any GMOs to prevent any uncertain effects on natural resources and ecosystems, and because the risk in some cases could be irreversible.

## How much is changing?



NOT MUCH

A LOT

**We’d love to hear your views:**

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