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**Media Release  
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**EDS welcomes Government decisions on mining**

The Environmental Defence Society has congratulated the Government for its decisions regarding Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act which have just been formally announced.

“We are delighted by the u-turn and consider it demonstrates a new green awareness by the National-led Government which is most welcome,” said EDS Chairman Gary Taylor.

“A lot of effort has gone into explaining the legal and environmental implications of this decision. It appears that someone was listening. Notwithstanding the earlier spin from Crown Minerals Division and Straterra, the industry lobby group in support of change, we have a good outcome.

“In my view the decision to lock down all National Parks from future mining is especially noteworthy and principled. We now have a national consensus, a compact between Government and the people that recognises the primacy of conservation in all our National Parks. It means we won’t have to argue about mining in National Parks again.

“It is also excellent that mining on the Coromandel Peninsula north of the Kopu-Hikuai Road and on Great Barrier Island is off the agenda. Both proposals were extremely controversial.

“Some may say that we still potentially have mining in the Conservation estate. Yes we do and that has always been the case outside of Schedule 4 land. But any mining proposals in those lower value areas will still have to pass the hurdle of the Resource Management Act on a case-by-case basis. I note that some of the areas to be surveyed in Northland have been rejected for prospecting in the past so there are no automatic rights implied there.

“Some may say that this is an embarrassing back-down by the Government. I think it shows a Government that is listening and is becoming more environmentally aware as it matures in office. That is a very good thing.

“We have a large number of very important environmental reforms underway at present and this decision bodes well for good outcomes from those processes. They include devising an effective environmental regime for mining and oil exploration in the EEZ so that environmental disasters won’t occur there.

“The only aspect of the Schedule 4 announcement that is unacceptable, is giving the Minister of Energy joint decision-making power with the Minister of Conservation over access to non-Schedule 4 Conservation land. That proposal will need careful scrutiny at the select committee stage.

“I’m really delighted and encouraged by this decision. To me it signals a new direction on environmental issues by the Government,” Mr Taylor concluded.