



Media statement

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EDS's submission finds critical flaws in the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Bill

The Environmental Defence Society today lodged its submission to the Local Government and Environment Committee on the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Bill.

The Bill creates an environmental consenting regime for activities in the EEZ and continental shelf including petroleum exploitation, seabed mining, energy generation, carbon capture and storage and marine farming.

EDS's submission identifies major inadequacies in the Bill. It calls for significant changes to ensure that the environmental values of the EEZ and continental shelf are protected in the long-term public interest.

"The clauses setting out the Bill's purpose and framework for marine consenting are among the most critical," said EDS Policy Director Raewyn Peart. "But these currently enable economic considerations to override adverse impacts on the environment, irrespective of their severity.

"This approach will result in environmental degradation, loss of precious biodiversity and damage to New Zealand's international reputation.

"It also fails to comply with New Zealand's obligations under the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* to 'protect and preserve' the marine environment.

"This will be of particular concern to the international community because of the large proportion of the world's marine species, including seabirds and marine mammals which are present here.

"Provisions in the new legislation to address risk need to be strengthened in light of the devastating environmental impacts of The *Rena* disaster," added Ms Peart. There are also a number of procedural issues which need to be rectified.

"EDS supports the government's initiative to put in place environmental legislation for the EEZ.

"We have suggested comprehensive amendments to address the inadequacies in the Bill and will be appearing before the Select Committee in February," concluded Ms Peart.

A copy of the submission is available at www.eds.org.nz