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Media Release

EDS welcomes decision on Te Mata track

The Environmental Defence Society has welcomed the announcement by Hastings District Council that it intends to take action to restore the top part of the contested track on Te Mata.

“The use of special RMA powers by the Council to remove a clear safety hazard is warranted in these circumstances,” said EDS CEO Gary Taylor.

“It is certainly a step in the right direction but there are some wrinkles in the proposition that need ironing out.

“First, the release opens with confirmation that the top part of the track will be *removed*. However, it concludes by saying that *remediation* will under taken and financed by the Council. The report Council is relying on has recommended *removal*. This may simply be the use of imprecise language but the track needs to be removed and clarity provided.

“Secondly, the removal is limited to the top 500 metres. This leaves the bottom part of the track in place, leading nowhere, and access to the hazardous top section still available while removal actions are undertaken. The track’s adverse impacts also aren’t limited to the top portion. The Council should look to remove more of the track on the hill slope, leaving just the lower portion for Craggy Range Vineyard to remove.

“Once the track is removed and the site restored, or undertakings have been given to do so, EDS would be willing to consider withdrawing its High Court proceedings against the Council.

“The Council will then have clear air in which to engage with its wider community, especially local iwi and kaitiaki, over the future planning regime for Te Mata and environs,” Mr Taylor concluded.