

**15 June 2018**  
**Media Release**



### **EDS supports Visitor Levy**

The Environmental Defence Society supports the Government's proposal to introduce a targeted Visitor Levy to apply at the New Zealand border.

The Minister of Tourism has announced a proposed levy of \$25-35 for inbound visitors to New Zealand with an expected annual return of \$57-80 million. The funds will be spent on tourism infrastructure and conservation.

"EDS has been supportive of such a levy for some time. It makes sense for visitors to contribute to the facilities and environment they enjoy through a direct, hypothecated charge of this kind," said EDS CEO Gary Taylor.

"This move will help transition New Zealand towards a premium rather than mass tourism market. It will also enable the funding of much-needed infrastructure including toilets, caravan parks and scenic viewpoints. We really need to catch up with the massive increases in visitor numbers with much improved facilities that will reduce adverse impacts on the environment.

"New Zealand's international offering is one based largely on our natural world: our landscapes, forests, beaches and native flora and fauna. Setting aside a proportion of the levy income for investment in maintaining and improving our natural capital makes good sense.

"The question that needs careful thought is how to divvy up the additional revenue between conservation and infrastructure. On infrastructure it would be good to look to joint funding with local government. On conservation we need to direct funding to managing visitor impacts on the conservation estate.

"Tourism is our biggest export earner and New Zealand needs to address the way forward for the sector with more care than in the past when we have free-rided on our natural attractions.

Finally, it is quite strange that we have a very large Ministry for Primary Industries but tourism in our country is managed by a very small group inside MBIE. Institutional reform should be the next cab off the rank," said Mr Taylor.