

## **Maori to raise carbon credits with tribunal**

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### **The Federation of Maori Authorities is taking a challenge about carbon credits to the Waitangi Tribunal and the Maori Party is supporting it.**

The Government has yet to decide if it will grant carbon credits to the owners of forests planted after 1990, but has said it does not favour such a move.

Its failure to offer carbon credits and a proposal to penalise deforestation has created a clamour in the industry, with many members saying the Government's position is contributing to a record number of trees being chopped down.

Maori Party co-leader Tariana Turia said the Treaty said hapu had authority and ownership rights of their resources including forests.

"The plan to confiscate carbon credits and impose a tax regime on forest owners is another example of this Government's failure to behave in a way which is consistent with the articles of the Treaty," she said.

The Maori Party also supported other forest owners who wanted to claim credits.

The Green Party recently said the forestry sector should get financial benefits and the National Party said it would return an as yet unspecified level of carbon credits to the affected forest owners.

Groups and individuals have until the end of March to make submissions on discussion papers.

Options included a flat charge on changing the use of forestry land, passing laws to enforce a national cap on how much non-Kyoto forest can be cut down, and using the Resource Management Act to control deforestation.

Forestry Minister Jim Anderton has said he favours allocating tradeable "deforestation permits" to foresters, which could be cashed in when they cut down trees.

Earlier this month he said the value of carbon credits from forest plantings since 1990 was \$1.24 billion. He said paying foresters would be at the expense of tax payers.

"To claim forest owners have a right to credits from trees that were planted before carbon credits were even invented is to suggest farmers, motorists and the rest of New Zealand should pay for their emissions dating back to 1990."