



SUBMISSION

Submission: Fast-track Approvals Bill

To: Environment Committee

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About Ia Ara Aotearoa Transporting New Zealand

Ia Ara Aotearoa Transporting New Zealand is a national membership association representing the road freight transport industry. Our 1,200 member companies operate and support urban, rural and inter-regional commercial freight transport services throughout the country.

As the peak body and authoritative voice of the road freight sector, Transporting New Zealand helps trucking firms operate successful, safe and sustainable businesses. Our strategic priorities are:

- Providing one industry voice for advocacy
- Promoting the road freight transport industry
- Attracting talent and promoting workforce development
- Supporting our members and customers
- Sustainability, safety and responsible emissions reduction

New Zealand's commercial road transport sector employs 55,384 people (2.1% of the total workforce), and has a gross annual turnover in the order of \$6.4 billion (1.8% of GDP). Road freight transport accounts for 93% of the total tonnage of freight moved in New Zealand (MoT National Freight Demands Study 2018).

Transporting New Zealand submission on the Fast-track Approvals Bill

- 1 Transporting New Zealand appreciates the opportunity to make a submission to the Environment Committee on the Fast-track Approvals Bill (the **Bill**).
- 2 Transporting New Zealand strongly supports the Bill. Notwithstanding this, we have several suggestions to help ensure the legislation effectively delivers regionally and nationally significant infrastructure, and supports a productive and efficient supply chain.
- 3 This submission is structured into three parts:
 - a. The need for a “one-stop-shop” consent pathway.
 - b. Enabling the Roads of National Significance Programme.
 - c. Additional recommendations.

The urgent need for resource consent reform

- 4 New Zealand’s current consenting regime is a significant barrier to major development projects being completed within a reasonable timeframe and budget. Current consenting processes cost projects \$1.29b per year, and the length of time taken to consent key projects doubled between 2015 and 2021.¹
- 5 Infrastructure developers also report that consenting authorities are overly focussed on localised impacts, not taking sufficient account of wider societal benefits.²
- 6 This well-established policy failure impacts our road freight operator members in two key respects:
 - a. The delays and expense associated with completing transport projects leave our members and other road users operating on increasingly congested and unsafe local roads and state highways.
 - b. The consenting obstacles to development projects, particularly in the primary industries and natural resources sector restrict the growth of the freight task and associated economic and social benefits.
- 7 The Fast-track Approvals Bill is an essential interim measure while the government progresses more substantive resource management reform in the medium term.

The Roads of National Significance Programme

- 8 Transporting New Zealand submits that the Bill should be used to enable the Roads of National Significance Programme and other Major Transport Projects (**priority transport projects**) set out in the draft Government Policy Statement on land transport 2024.

¹ The Cost of Consenting Infrastructure Projects in New Zealand, July 2021, Sapere report commissioned by Te Waihanganga.

² Ibid.

- 9 The priority transport projects have a strong public mandate, having been campaigned on by the National Party in the general election. They are also highly consistent with the eligibility criteria for projects that may be referred to Expert Panel, at section 17 of the Bill.
- 10 In particular, we consider the following five projects should be prioritised for inclusion at Schedule 2 Part A: Projects listed for direct referral to expert panel:
- a. Whangarei to Auckland: Alternative to Brynderwyns.
 - b. Tauranga to Auckland: Tauriko West State Highway 29.
 - c. Auckland roads: The East West Link.
 - d. Greater Wellington: Second Mt Victoria Tunnel and Basin Reserve upgrade.
 - e. Canterbury: The Belfast to Pegasus Motorway and Woodend Bypass.
- 11 Fast-tracking these priority transport projects, in consultation with NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, will help ensure they can be delivered within a reasonable time-frame and budget.

Additional recommendations

- 12 Transporting New Zealand submits that section 17(3) of the Bill should be amended to reference the importance of supply chain considerations. For example:
- a. “In considering under subsection (2)(d) whether the project would have significant regional or national benefits, the joint Ministers may consider whether the project—
(k) would support a productive and efficient supply chain”.
- 13 This would help ensure that potential fast-track projects are not assessed in isolation, and that important considerations like ensuring an adequate supply of aggregate for construction projects and additional roading capacity to transport natural resources and primary goods are given due consideration.
- 14 We understand that this is consistent with submissions from organisations including BusinessNZ and the Aggregate and Quarry Association.
- 15 Transporting New Zealand also supports the recommendations in BusinessNZ’s submission, particularly around managing accusations of Ministerial favouritism, practical accountability mechanisms, adequate resourcing of the Expert Panel, and consideration of a sunset clause in the Bill following the full replacement legislation for the Resource Management Act.

I wish to speak to this submission in hearings conducted by the Environment Select Committee on the Fast-track Approvals Bill.

ENDS