

23 April 2020

Horizons Regional Council
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Manawatu Mail Centre
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via: consent.submissions@horizons.govt.nz

RE: Public Submissions on Manawatū Tararua Highway, APP-2017201552.00

Thank you for the opportunity to submit regarding Waka Kotahi's main works resource consent applications for Te Ahu a Turanga: Manawatū Tararua Highway.

Business Central represents the business interests of over 3,600 members throughout central New Zealand; from Taranaki across to Gisborne and down to Nelson. Business Central is one of the four regional organisations comprising New Zealand's peak business advocacy group, BusinessNZ. In Wellington, our organisation operates the Wellington Chamber of Commerce, accredited to the New Zealand Chamber of Commerce network. Our organisation also delivers ExportNZ to Wellington and the Hawke's Bay.

We are writing in support of Waka Kotahi's main works resource consent applications for Te Ahu a Turanga: Manawatū Tararua Highway, and in support of the project overall.

The Manawatū Gorge replacement highway is a crucial transport link for the Lower North Island network. Since the closure of State Highway 3, now three years ago, the road transport industry has been forced to use side roads and residential streets not accustomed to heavy transport traffic. The alternative route has also had speed limits reduced due to the sharp corners and high level of traffic using the route.

This was especially evident after the 2017 Kaikoura earthquake. With Wellington port closed to container ships, export goods from the lower North Island had to be transported by road to Napier port and used the side roads for several months.

While our members in the area and road transport companies understand why the gorge road was closed, the alternative roads are not fit-for-purpose and the delays this causes comes at an increased time and financial cost to businesses dependant on the route.

Our region is also susceptible to earthquakes, the replacement highway would be an important part of the resilience infrastructure in the Wairapa-Manawatū area.

Given the importance of replacing the Manawatū Gorge highway, our organisation believes it is vital the Waka Kotahi's resource application for Te Ahu a Turanga: Manawatū Tararua Highway be approved and construction work fast-tracked.

With the Infrastructure Industry Reference Group scoping 'shovel-ready' projects to reduce the economic impact of COVID-19, we would strongly suggest this highway being put forward as one of those projects due to the reasons listed above.

Our organisation does not wish to make an oral submission on the issue.

Kind regards,



John Milford