

Submission

Public Works (Critical Infrastructure) Amendment Bill

Submission to:

Transport and Infrastructure Committee

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Submitter

The New Zealand Forest Owners Association Incorporated (FOA) is the representative membership body for the commercial plantation forest growing industry. FOA members are responsible for the management of approximately 1.2 million hectares of Aotearoa New Zealand's plantation forests and over 70% of the annual harvest.

The New Zealand Farm Forestry Association (FFA) represents people who own small-scale private forests and/or are interested in the many values of trees. Currently FFA have over 1200 members representing a good cross-section of the approximately 15,000 entities owning private forests in Aotearoa New Zealand. Small forest owners represent more than 96% of the participants in the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme.

In 2023, the forest growing sector was worth \$6.6 billion in export value and has a 12% share of rural land use. It contributes 1.6% of New Zealand's GDP and employs approximately 42,000 people in wood production, processing, and the commercial sector.

Summary

FOA and FFA welcome the opportunity to make a submission on the Public Works (Critical Infrastructure) Amendment Bill ("the Bill"). We are broadly supportive of the Bill.

It is noted that the Bill is limited to specified infrastructure projects and introduces a faster, fairer land acquisition process with a streamlined submission process. Initially FOA/FFA had concerns that the landowner objection process had been replaced but, we support provisions that the Minister must undertake similar considerations as was required of the Environment Court.

The incentive payments are supported. However, we consider that due to the reduced rights of appeal through the courts that compensation provisions, for this specified infrastructure, be increased.

The provision for review of the effectiveness of the Bill's provisions within three years is supported. The Bill introduces major changes to the existing process, that have not been tested, and a review process is considered a reasonable approach.

FOA and FFA wish to put on record that it has more interest in the proposals for the overall review of the Public Works Act and compensation for regulatory takings (restrictions on the use of private property in the public interest) either within the review of the Public Works Act or the Resource Management Act.

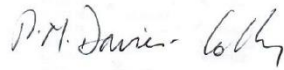
Owners of forests are and continue to be adversely affected by the imposition of planning overlays for significant natural areas, landscapes and features, heritage sites, power line corridors along with rules for biodiversity protection.

Closure

We do not object to the submission being made public. We welcome the opportunity for further discussion and engagement.



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