

SUBMISSION ON THE BARRYTOWN MINERALS PROJECT

Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 — Southern Block Substantive Application (Tāiko Critical Minerals Limited)

To the Expert Panel,

I write in opposition to the substantive application by Tāiko Critical Minerals Limited to mine and process mineral sands on the Southern Block of the Barrytown Flats.

Thirty years ago I came around a bend on the Coast Road and the world opened up — sea on one side, sky the size of a held breath, and the flats running quiet and open to the north. I did not come for convenience. I came because the light here does something I have never found anywhere else, because the surf keeps a rhythm you can set a life by, and because on my first evening a line of oystercatchers went past low over the water, calling to each other in the dusk, and I understood I had found the place I would grow old in.

Thirty years is long enough for a place to stop being scenery and become a life. I know this stretch of coast the way you know an old friend's face — where the terns gather after a nor'wester, which paddock floods first in a big tide, the particular blue the sea turns an hour before rain. My land holds open coastal habitat that has, for two decades, been a returning ground for shorebirds and seabirds who ask nothing of this place except that it be left alone. My north boundary meets the proposed mine almost exactly where Fagan Creek marks the edge of the Southern Block — which means the quiet I have built my life around ends, quite literally, at my back fence.

My objection is not sentiment alone — the law already recognises that mining activity should not be permitted where it causes a prejudicial effect on the use and enjoyment of neighbouring land by its owner or occupier.

Section 57 of the Crown Minerals Act 1991 withholds authorisation for mining that is likely to have such a prejudicial effect on an adjoining owner or occupier's use and enjoyment of their land. **Section 55(2)** of the same Act separately protects specified classes of land — including smaller landholdings — from imposed mining access, reflecting Parliament's clear view that the settled, everyday enjoyment of a home by its neighbours is not something to be waved aside for mineral extraction. I ask the Panel to give these protections real weight: over thirty years of quiet enjoyment of this coast, from a property immediately adjoining the proposed mine boundary, is precisely the interest this legislation was written to protect.

I am not opposed to progress in the abstract. I am opposed to trading thirty years of tranquillity, and the birds that share this coast with me, for the promises of a company that has never operated a mine anywhere, and a mineral separation process this country has barely seen before. What is proposed a few hundred metres from my door is not a neighbour I can get used to: pits and pumps running through the working day, and trucks grinding along the Coast Road in numbers this road was never built to carry. The World Health Organization treats sustained noise above 55 decibels as a serious health hazard, not a mere inconvenience, and at this distance that threshold will not be an occasional visitor — it will be the new sound of my afternoons.

The Bradley et al. (2026) study of this deposit, found that the heavy mineral sand at Barrytown carries thorium- and uranium-bearing monazite and uranothorite, that in-situ alteration is already releasing radon, and that some magnetically separated fractions reach nearly eight times the level New Zealand law treats as radioactive.

Residential radon readings taken nearby already exceed the WHO reference level. Whatever comfort has been offered about safety, it is difficult to feel reassured when the science says the ground itself, once disturbed at scale, does not stay quiet either.

This proposal has been here before, wearing different names. The original application was declined by the Grey District and West Coast Regional Councils in 2022, for effects on this coast's ecology and water that could not be reliably predicted. A narrower version, brought back under a different company name, only scraped through in 2024 and remains contested. Now it returns again, rebranded once more, asking to be waved through on an accelerated process that allows far less room for the very scrutiny that twice found real cause for concern. A coastline should not have to keep defending the same quiet, against the same mine, under a new name, every few years.

I ask the Panel to decline this application. Failing that, I ask that no approval be granted without an independent, site-specific assessment of noise and radiological effects at properties along Glen Road adjoining the Southern Block, and without real, enforceable protection for the coastal birdlife that has called this stretch of shoreline home for as long as I have. After years of an ordinary, unrepeatable happiness — the birds at dusk, the particular quiet of this coast — should not be treated as the acceptable cost of someone else's balance sheet.

Yours faithfully,

Ian Merlyn Collyer

Glen Road, Barrytown