



24 AUG 2026

The Expert Panel – Fast-track Approvals Act application
Environmental Protection Authority
Waterloo Quay
Wellington

To the Expert Panel

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the substantive application for the Southern Link Inland Port FTAA-2604-1207, under section 53(2)(j) of the Fast-track Approvals Act. My comments focus on whether the application is likely to deliver economic benefits, based on the information provided by the applicant.

Southern Link Inland Port FTAA-2604-1207

The application is for an approximately 40-hectare inland port and logistics hub at 270–292 Dukes Road North, Mosgiel, Dunedin, to be developed in three stages over 10 years. It includes a new rail siding to the Taieri Branch Line, approximately 80,000 square metres of warehousing, a 5-hectare container depot and terminal areas, break-bulk storage, intermodal freight facilities, and supporting transport and utility infrastructure. The project is intended to consolidate and expand freight, warehousing, and container-handling activities that support Port Otago and regional supply chains.

According to the economic assessment prepared for the applicant, construction expenditure is estimated at approximately \$213 million over the development period. The assessment estimates this would generate approximately \$191.3 million in total value-added GDP (direct, indirect and induced impacts, expressed in 2020-dollar terms) over the construction programme. This has a net present value of approximately \$147.8 million when future impacts are discounted. The assessment estimates construction activity would support approximately 1,489 FTE-years across the 10-year development programme, equivalent to a simple annualised average of 149 FTEs per year.

Once fully operational, the facility is estimated to support approximately 125 ongoing FTE positions, including 21 transferred from existing operations. This would result in approximately 104 net additional jobs in Dunedin in the short to medium term. The assessment does not quantify ongoing GDP, annual revenue, or wages and salaries associated with operational activity.

The wider benefits would be primarily regional, with the proposal intended to support freight and logistics activity across Otago and the lower South Island by increasing warehousing and container-handling capacity, improving rail connectivity, and reducing freight movements on urban roads. The assessment estimates the project could initially remove approximately 15,000 annual truck movements from Dunedin roads, increase rail freight volumes, and reduce transport emissions by approximately 1,050 to 1,100 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year through modal shift from road to rail. It will also support supply-chain resilience, freight efficiency, and export-oriented industries that rely on containerised freight services.

On balance, the proposal appears likely to deliver significant regional economic benefits under section 22(2)(a)(iv) of the Act, particularly through the scale of construction activity, employment generation, and potential improvements to freight and logistics infrastructure.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Willis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon Nicola Willis

Minister for Economic Growth