

Hon Shane Jones

Minister for Oceans and Fisheries
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Resources
Associate Minister of Finance
Associate Minister for Energy



30 April 2026

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Fast-track Approvals Act referral application – Woodend Bypass (Belfast to Pegasus) (FTAA-2512-1157)

Dear Chris,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this referral application under the Fast-track Approvals Act (FTAA 2024).

The FTAA 2024 has been established to provide a regime that makes it easier and quicker for regionally and nationally significant infrastructure projects to gain the approvals needed for development, in support of this Government's economic growth objectives.

I have considered the application and its alignment with the priorities of my Regional Development portfolio. My comments are attached as Annex One.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'S. Jones'.

Hon Shane Jones
Minister for Regional Development

Annex One – Regional Development comments

Project overview

1. The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) has applied for Fast Track Approval for its proposal to develop the Christchurch Northern Motorway in the Waimakariri District, with two key elements:
 - a. An upgrade to State Highway 1 (SH1) from approximately 200m south of Ohoka Road Overpass to the Cam River (a total distance of approximately 4km).
 - b. Construction of a new four-lane state highway, bypassing Woodend township, from the Cam River to approximately 700m north of the Pegasus / Ravenwood intersection (a total distance of approximately 7km).
2. Economic analysis provided by the applicant states that, over the anticipated seven-year construction period, the project is expected to create:
 - a. approximately \$320 million of economic benefit for the Canterbury region (an average annual benefit of \$45.7 million)
 - b. 624 full-time equivalent jobs during the peak construction year.
3. Once operational, the application indicates that the project will become an important asset to support Canterbury's future growth, enhancing freight efficiency and connectivity to support regional industries to access local and global markets. Information provided indicates that the development will deliver a three-minute travel time saving, and up to 10 minutes at peak times.
4. The 2024 Government Policy Statement for Land Transport identifies the proposed project as a Road of National Significance.

Regional Development comments

5. Christchurch is the South Island's primary economic hub. Given the proposed roading development's location north of Christchurch, it is expected to offer ongoing economic benefit to the Canterbury region and potentially the country, by improving land transport connectivity for industry in the region.
6. However, these benefits are not quantified in the application, and the travel time-savings appear modest. The analysis relies on a comparison to other projects such as the Waikato Expressway, which have been shown to raise real GDP beyond direct impacts. This may be an accurate statement, although the degree of this impact from NZTA's proposal may differ significantly to similar projects in other locations due to various factors (such as population density, location proximity to other major economic hubs).
7. At its peak, the construction programme is expected to offer regionally-significant employment opportunity. The projected average annual economic benefit of \$45.7 million from the seven-year construction period may be considered important in the context of the Waimakariri District's annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which for year-ending December 2025 was \$3.19 billion (according to data from Infometrics). However, the regional impact in the context of the Canterbury region may be considered modest – for year-ending December 2025, Canterbury's GDP was around \$54 billion.