
**APPLICATION BY SOUTHERN LINK PROPERTY LIMITED FOR THE SOUTHERN LINK
INLAND PORT**

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HANNAH GOSLIN ON BEHALF OF OTAGO REGIONAL
COUNCIL**

14 September 2026

1. This opening statement provides a brief outline of the Otago Regional Council's (ORC) technical position since the filing of comments under Section 53 of the Fast Track Approvals Act (FTAA).
2. ORC's technical review of the application has focused on freshwater ecology, groundwater, contaminated land, natural hazards, and earthworks and erosion and sediment control. Evidence on these matters has been provided by Mr Raymond Chang and Ms Emily Lion-Cachet (freshwater ecology, Beca), Mr Mike Thorley (groundwater, Beca), Dr Ben Waterhouse (contaminated land, Beca), Ms Amanda Ling (natural hazards), and Mr Jason Smith (earthworks and erosion and sediment control).
3. There has been significant narrowing of issues since ORC filed Section 53 comments. The Applicant provided comprehensive Section 55 comments and summary statements, and the respective technical experts have had productive discussions on freshwater ecology, groundwater, and natural hazards. ORC appreciates the Applicant's willingness to engage in a shared effort to continue to narrow the outstanding issues. Those discussions, together with the exchange of information have assisted in identifying areas of agreement and clarifying the matters that remain outstanding.
4. ORC considers that the potential effects of the proposal can be appropriately managed. The matters that remain outstanding are not fundamental concerns regarding the suitability of the proposal, but are primarily concerned with ensuring the technical assumptions and mitigation measures proposed are appropriately reflected in the consent conditions.
5. With respect to freshwater ecology, Mr Chang and Ms Lion-Cachet consider the revised Stormwater Monitoring Plan, proposed approach to calculating trigger values and adaptive management framework now provides an appropriate basis for identifying and managing effects on Silver Stream/Whakaehu. Mr Chang and Ms Lion-Cachet's remaining position is that:
 - (a) baseline monitoring must be undertaken before bulk earthworks commence;
 - (b) ORC are to be notified in the event of an exceedance of a trigger value during the first round of sampling;
 - (c) ongoing emphasis should remain on source control, treatment train performance and adaptive management; and
 - (d) appropriate discharge monitoring should continue for the lifetime of the proposed discharge to provide certainty of ongoing treatment device performance and so changes to site operation and catchment characteristics can be captured over time.
6. There is agreement between experts that significant groundwater effects are unlikely and that the Groundwater Assessment provides a reasonable conceptual model of the site. The remaining matters primarily relate to ensuring that the assumptions in the Applicant's

assessment carry through into detailed design and consent conditions. In particular, Mr Thorley's position is that the areas where stormwater may discharge to land should be identified and considered alongside contaminated land investigation and validation work.

7. Dr Waterhouse considers the contaminated land risks can be appropriately managed through the consent conditions filed as part of the Applicant's Section 55 comments. His remaining concern relates to the interaction between operational phase stormwater discharges and potentially contaminated soils within the footprint of proposed swales and the attenuation basin. Dr Waterhouse considers this concern can be adequately addressed through consent conditions.
8. From a natural hazards perspective, there is agreement between experts that the potential flood hazard effects can be appropriately managed. A consent condition has been agreed in the summary statements of Ms Ling and Mr Craig.
9. With respect to earthworks and erosion and sediment control, there is agreement between experts that the potential effect of earthworks can be appropriately managed and the proposed consent conditions are suitable. Mr Smith's remaining recommendation is for a standalone condition requiring the provision of a Chemical Treatment Plan, and its implementation if chemical treatment is found to be necessary.
10. ORC's experts are available to assist the panel with any questions, and ORC looks forward to further engagement with the Panel and participants at the conditions hearing next week.



Hannah Goslin

14 September 2026