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Rob van Voorthuysen
Woodend Bypass Project Expert Panel Chair

By email: substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz

Fast-track Approvals Act substantive application – State Highway 1 North Canterbury – Woodend Bypass Project (Belfast to Pegasus)

Dear Rob

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi's (NZTA) substantive application under the *Fast-track Approvals Act 2024* (FTAA 2024) for the State Highway 1 North Canterbury – Woodend Bypass (Belfast to Pegasus) (the Project).

NZTA has applied with the Environmental Protection Authority for fast-track approval to develop the Project, which entails the construction and operation of a new section of State Highway 1 (SH1) through North Canterbury. The Project is intended to bypass the existing SH1 route through Woodend, Pegasus, and surrounding communities, and includes associated works to support improved safety, capacity, and network performance.

SH1 is a critical transport corridor for the South Island, supporting freight movement, tourism, regional connectivity, and access to goods and services. Constraints on the existing network through North Canterbury, including congestion and safety pressures, are well recognised and have implications for local communities and traffic coming through.

Based on the information provided, the Project is expected to deliver improvements in safety and travel time reliability, and to support more efficient freight and passenger movement between Christchurch, North Canterbury communities, and the wider South Island.

Economic analysis provided by the applicant states that, over the anticipated seven-year construction period, the Project is expected to create:

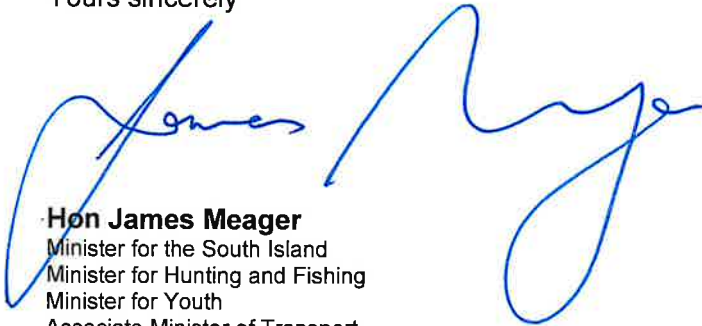
- a) approximately \$320.00 million in economic benefit to the Canterbury region (an average annual benefit of \$45.70 million)
- b) 624 full-time equivalent jobs during the peak construction year.

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 Project will deliver a three-minute travel time saving, and up to 10 minutes at peak times. The Project has been identified as a priority by the Waimakariri District Council.

I note that the application seeks a range of approvals, including resource consent or designation, wildlife approvals, archaeological authority, and complex freshwater fisheries approvals. Any detailed assessment of these factors appropriately sits with the Expert Panel and relevant administering agencies under the FTAA 2024.

I have considered the information provided and its alignment with the priorities of my South Island portfolio. I recognise that the timely delivery of well-planned, nationally and regionally significant transport infrastructure can play an important role in supporting economic activity, safety, and resilience across the South Island.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Meager', is written over the typed name and titles.

Hon James Meager
Minister for the South Island
Minister for Hunting and Fishing
Minister for Youth
Associate Minister of Transport