

# Hon Chris Bishop

Attorney-General  
Minister of Housing  
Minister for Infrastructure  
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform  
Minister of Transport  
Associate Minister of Finance



14 MAY 2026

FTAA-2512-1153

Dave Serjeant  
Fast-track Expert Panel Chair  
substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz

Dear Dave,

Thank you for the invitation to comment on Taharoa Ironsands Limited's Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA) substantive application, the Central and Southern Blocks Mining Project (FTAA-2512-1153). I am responding in my capacity as Minister Responsible for RMA Reform.

Mining and export-oriented infrastructure are important for growth and prosperity. Our view is our planning system has not been enabling of growth, hence the establishment of the FTAA. I have attached my comments relating to the Central and Southern Mining Project in Appendix 1.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my broad support for projects that deliver positive outcomes for New Zealand, including regional employment, export revenue, and the wellbeing of remote communities. This letter reflects the Government's economic growth and infrastructure priorities.

Thank you for your correspondence on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CB rs / 1'.

Hon Chris Bishop  
**Minister for Infrastructure**  
**Minister Responsible for RMA Reform**

## **Appendix 1 – Comments on the Central and Southern Mining Project fast-track application – FTAA-2512-1153**

The Central and Southern Mining Project involves the continuation and expansion of ironsand mining activities at Taharoa, including associated coastal, marine and onshore operations. The project builds on an existing mining operation that has contributed to the New Zealand economy and the Taharoa community for several decades.

The mine has generated significant export earnings to date and is forecast to continue contributing materially through to 2055. It is a major regional employer, supporting approximately 350 full-time equivalent roles, and is New Zealand's largest exporter by volume. The surrounding remote community is heavily dependent on the mine for employment, housing, essential services and infrastructure.

Recent amendments to Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) national direction that came into force in January 2026 do not materially change the assessment pathway for the Central and Southern Blocks Mining Project, but they provide clearer and more enabling policy context.

Amendments to the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2023 broaden the mineral extraction exceptions to recognise regional benefits. The application does not appear to rely on those exceptions, as adverse effects on Significant Natural Areas are proposed to be avoided or mitigated these changes reinforce that mineral extraction activities with regional benefits, like this project are recognised.

Amendments to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 strengthen recognition of functional and operational need for some activities to locate in the coastal environment, which aligns with the project's port and shipping infrastructure given the absence of practicable alternatives.

Across the national direction suite, clearer articulation of operational need assists assessment of location-dependent mining and export infrastructure. Overall, the amended national direction supports consideration of the project's regional and national benefits while leaving the balancing of adverse effects and benefits for the Expert Panel under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.