

# Kaipara District Council submission on Fast-Track Approvals Bill

**Meeting:** Kaipara District Council  
**Date of meeting:** 29 May 2024  
**Reporting officer:** Michael Day, General Manager – Engagement & Transformation

## Purpose | Ngā whāinga

To update Council on Kaipara District Council's submission on the Fast-Track Approvals Bill, which was submitted to the Environment Committee on 16 April 2024.

## Executive summary | Whakarāpopototanga

Kaipara District Council (Council) has submitted on the Fast-Track Approvals Bill. To meet the consultation deadline set by Parliament (19 April 2024), Council followed its adopted process to approve the submission. In this instance, the submission was approved by Mayor Jepson, Deputy Mayor Larsen and the Chief Executive. This report presents the submission for information purposes, which is available to view at **Attachment A**.

## Recommendation | Ngā tūtohunga

That the Kaipara District Council:

- a) Notes the Kaipara District Council submission on the Fast-Track Approvals Bill, located at Attachment A.

## Context | Horopaki

The costs and delays associated with consenting large projects (especially significant infrastructure projects) in New Zealand are well documented. There are several reasons for those delays. In addition to the submission and appeal rights available under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), large projects often require a suite of other regulatory approvals. Each approval carries its own appeal rights or judicial review risk. For an unlucky project, that can mean that the proponent will face a long period of rolling litigation before it can get shovels in the ground – leading to cost escalation and timeline slippage.

One of the new Government's environmental law reform goals was to introduce a new, permanent fast-track consenting regime. The purpose of this bill is to provide a streamlined decision-making process to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. The intention of the new legislation is to seek a more efficient approval process for projects of regional and national significance and a "one-stop shop" is proposed. The Bill can be accessed here - [Fast-track Approvals Bill 31-1 \(2024\)](#), [Government Bill Contents – New Zealand Legislation](#)

In simple terms, the Bill aims to cut red tape and to speed up projects of regional and national significance. It proposes to do this by requiring Ministerial approval for the projects that qualify, which means that Councils (e.g. Kaipara) would not be asked to provide approvals (e.g. provide resource consents) for these major projects.

## Discussion | Ngā kōrerorero

On 5<sup>th</sup> April, staff provided Elected Members with an overview (via email) of the Fast-Track Bill and provided an opportunity to provide feedback into the Council submission. To meet the consultation deadlines set by Central Government, Council was required to follow its adopted delegation

process to approve submissions on legislative amendments. This involved the final submission being signed off by the Mayor, one other Elected Member chosen by the Mayor (Deputy Mayor Larsen was selected) and the Chief Executive.

The submission is available to view at **Attachment A**.

### **Policy and planning implications**

The Bill proposes to introduce a permanent fast track approvals regime for a range of infrastructure, housing and development projects. Those projects (which must be of national and/or regional significance) that go through the fast track process would avoid the requirement to gain any necessary resource consent approvals under the Kaipara District Plan or the Regional Plan for Northland.

### **Impacts on Māori**

None identified.

### **Significance and engagement | Hirahira me ngā whakapāpā**

The decisions or matters of this report are considered to have a low degree of significance in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy. No feedback is required, and the public will be informed of Council's decision via the agenda and minutes publication of this meeting, on the website and through other channels if appropriate.

### **Next steps | E whaiake nei**

The Bill is currently going through the Select Committee process and the Committee is expected to report back on its recommendations on September 7<sup>th</sup> 2024.

Once enacted, projects listed in Part A of Schedule 2 will be able to apply directly to an Expert Panel. Projects listed in Part B of Schedule 2 will still need to apply to Ministers for referral but will not need to demonstrate they are regionally or nationally significant.

As drafted once the Bill is enacted, any person or organisation will be able to apply to have their project fast-tracked by Joint Ministers<sup>1</sup>, who will determine whether a project should be fast tracked.

### **Attachments | Ngā tapiritanga**

	<b>Title</b>
A	Kaipara District Council submission on Fast-Track Approvals Bill.

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<sup>1</sup> The Joint Ministers are the Minister for Infrastructure, Minister of Transport and Minister for Regional Development.