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Hon Chris Bishop
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Dear Minister

Re: Speed management and reversal of speed limits in Waikato Region

Congratulations on your recent appointment as Minister of Transport. With your experience in resource management reform, and the Going for Housing Growth agenda, we look forward to working together to achieve better integrated land use and transport outcomes.

The Waikato regional transport network is a critical component of the Upper North Island transport system and freight task, and the safety and efficiency of transport along key strategic corridors is vital for ensuring wider regional and national economic outcomes. The Waikato Regional Transport Committee acknowledges the Government's commitment to ensure speed limits are set to assist economic development.

The Committee previously submitted on the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits 2024 (the Rule) and is disappointed that its concerns, and those of many submitters appears to have not been heeded.

The Committee has also recently lodged a submission to New Zealand Transport Agency on regional consultation under the new speed Rule. While that consultation related only to some state highways, our submission was wider ranging and reiterated our concerns including:

- Economic development and productivity appear to be considered a higher priority at the expense of safety.
- The current judicial review process into the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits 2024 should be completed prior to any further decisions on speed limits.
- The unintended outcomes of the Rule for areas outside schools mean that speed limits will be raised.
- The Rule and the consequent raising of speed limits are not aligned with the Government Policy Statement on land transport.
- There is a lack of evidence to support the reversals of speed limits, both in terms of travel time savings and productivity, and safety outcomes.
- Our submission supported the relevant Road Controlling Authorities' positions on the speed limits for those State highways subject to a consultation process.
- The unnecessary cost to taxpayers and ratepayers of the required changes.

In addition to the above, our submission included feedback on the two state highways within Hamilton City that were not being consulted on.

Of particular concern to the Committee is State Highway 26 Morrinsville Road. This road, while not fronting any school properties is in close proximity to three levels of schooling and has a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing used by many students from the surrounding schools. There are several reasons why this area should delay reversing speed limits:

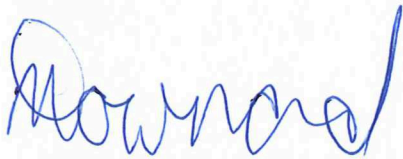
- The area has a history of serious injury crashes involving school children.
- Planned improvements for all road users (funded by NZTA) have been endorsed by Hamilton City Council.
- New Zealand Transport Agency is undertaking a revocation process to transfer this section of State Highway 26 to a local road to be controlled and managed by Hamilton City Council.

Similarly, State Highway 1C has a prominent role as a feeder to the Waikato Hospital precinct, as well as being a main thoroughfare for freight, and access to suburbs on the western side of the city. There are therefore many competing and conflicting uses for this road from emergency service vehicles, pedestrians such as hospital staff, patients and visitors, heavy freight, and local residents.

We request you provide direction to the New Zealand Transport Agency to enable a consultation period specifically for these two state highways, and that it be completed prior to the “auto-reversal” date of 1 July 2025.

We would be happy to engage further with you on any of the matters raised in this letter and look forward to working collaboratively with you on improving transport outcomes in the Waikato region.

Regards,



Mich'eal Downard
Chair Waikato Regional Transport Committee