

Hon Chris Bishop

Minister of Housing
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Minister of Transport
Leader of the House
Associate Minister of Finance
Associate Minister for Sport and Recreation



10 MAR 2025

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Rt Hon Simon Upton
Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
By email: Matthew.Paterson@pce.parliament.nz

Dear Simon,

Thank you for your letter of 6 December 2024 about the inclusion of Project Kea and the Silverstream Forest Development in Schedule 2 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the FTAA).

As you will be aware, the FTAA passed into law on 24 December 2024. The 149 projects listed in Schedule 2 of the FTAA are now able to apply for approvals through Expert Panels (the Panels).

I acknowledge your concerns that the Advisory Group may have had inadequate time and information to properly assess the projects considered for inclusion in Schedule 2, and your specific concerns about the potential environmental impacts of both projects.

The Fast-track process streamlines consenting for infrastructure and development projects that provide significant national or regional benefits by offering a consolidated, 'one-stop-shop' approach, ensuring more efficient decision-making.

Under the FTAA, Expert Panels reviewing substantive applications must seek comment from various parties, including relevant local authorities, administering agencies, Ministers, adjacent landowners, and applicants if further information is required. These panels have the authority to make final approval decisions and impose conditions to manage environmental impacts. Panel conveners may also establish appropriate timeframes for project consideration, taking into account factors such as scale and complexity.

I am confident that the FTAA framework enables Expert Panels to thoroughly assess and make well-informed decisions on all projects, whether listed or referred.

The Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) provided your office with copies of the Project Kea and the Silverstream Forest Development applications on 12 December 2024 in response to a direct request. The remainder of the documents relating to projects that applied to be listed in Schedule 2 can be found on the Ministry's website at: <https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/acts/fast-track-approvals/fast-track-projects/>.

The Ministry is responsible for the FTAA, while the Environmental Protection Authority will provide secretariat and administrative support to the Panels. Information on projects that have applied to Panels will be made available on the new Fast-track website in due course, at: <https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/>.

Yours sincerely

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform