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National Security Group
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Level 8 Executive Wing, Parliament Buildings,
Wellington 6021
New Zealand

Consultation: Strengthening the resilience of Aotearoa New Zealand's
critical infrastructure system

By email: infrastructureresilience@dpmxc.govt.nz

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Strengthening the resilience of Aotearoa New Zealand's critical infrastructure system

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback to strengthen the resilience of Aotearoa New Zealand's critical infrastructure system.

We note that there was limited engagement with local government on this consultation. This is disappointing given the sector is a provider of several pieces of critical infrastructure currently including the three waters and roads.

Background

Western Bay of Plenty District Council is a territorial local authority covering approximately 195,000 hectares. The population of the district is currently around 58,000. Towns in the District include Te Puke Ōmokoroa, Katikati, Waihi Beach, Maketu and Pukehina. We are a fast-growing district, and our population is expected to exceed 70,000 by 2041.

The district has approximately 910km of sealed roads, 163km of unsealed roads and 1073km of network connections to state highways. In addition to

this we currently provide 146.1km of stormwater pipes, 7 stormwater pump stations, over 60 wastewater pump stations and 10 water treatment plans.

We provide a significant amount of infrastructure and understand first hand the impact recent events have had on our networks ability to respond to the needs of our communities.

Submission points

Western Bay of Plenty District Council supports the points set out in the submission of Taituarā (Local Government Professionals Aotearoa) on this matter and provides the following additional comments identified as important to our District:

Climate change

Climate change is identified as one of four global megatrends posing challenges for our critical infrastructure system. We agree with this assessment, however, submit that climate change is already (not will) having direct and indirect impacts on our infrastructure.

Our district, like many others, has experienced these impacts firsthand multiple times this year alone with extreme weather events impacting infrastructure across the district including bridges and roads.

It should be noted that Councils and communities across Aotearoa are already undertaking planning in response to climate change, and this needs to be considered as part of this process alongside local government.

As a Council we have recently undertaken exposure assessments on key pieces of Council owned infrastructure in order to prioritise assets where further work on options to improve resilience will be undertaken. This will inform our asset management approach and Infrastructure Strategy going forward. Many coastal communities are considering their own responses to climate change with many considering developing climate change adaption plans, and the possible use of a Dynamic Adaptive Policy Pathways (DAPP).

Communities are what drive emergency responses and any planning around resilience needs to consider what they are already doing and aspire to achieve.

Affordability

The financial implications of enhancing infrastructure resilience are high. There appears to be limited information around the financial aspects and/or associated costs of the proposed changes in the consultation document.

As set out in the Taituarā submission, any funding supplied by central government comes from the taxpayer and in the local government context, the ratepayer. Rates affordability is already a key issue for many households.

The affordability of any proposals must be a key factor that is considered.

Minimum resilience standards

When setting minimum reliance standards, consideration also needs to be given to the presence and design of infrastructure and its impact on the environment (not just the environment's impact on infrastructure).

In addition, it is recommended that the assets' location and factors such as managed retreat also needs to be considered to inform any decision making.

We are more that happy to discuss any matters for clarification or to expand further.

Yours sincerely,



James Denyer

Mayor

Western Bay of Plenty District Council