

1 November 2019

New Zealand Transport Agency
National Office
Private Bag 6995
Wellington 6141

Via email to bayofplenty.speed.reviews@nzta.govt.nz

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: State Highway 2 Katikati to Tauranga speed review

Please find attached a submission on the New Zealand Transport Agency State Highway 2, Katikati to Tauranga speed review

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information on this submission.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Cameron
Senior Policy Analyst

TO: New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA)
SUBMISSION ON: State Highway 2 (SH2) Katikati to Tauranga speed review
NAME: New Zealand Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated (NZKGI)
ADDRESS: PO Box 4246, Mount Maunganui South 3149

1. Background to NZKGI

NZKGI was formed in 1993 to give kiwifruit growers their own organisation to develop a secure and stable kiwifruit industry. NZKGI represents 2,600 kiwifruit growers and gives growers their own voice in industry and government decision making. NZKGI works to advocate, protect and enhance the commercial & political interests of New Zealand kiwifruit growers.

2. The kiwifruit industry in the Bay of Plenty Region

Approximately 80% of New Zealand's kiwifruit crop is grown in the Bay of Plenty providing a significant contribution to the Bay of Plenty regional economy, with \$1.18 billion in revenue being generated for the region in 2017/2018. The industry provides significant employment to the Bay of Plenty Region employing 10,762 FTE in the year 2015/2016¹. Zespri, the kiwifruit marketer, has committed to more than double global sales revenue to \$4.5 billion by 2025. The projected growth of the industry will contribute significantly to the Bay of Plenty GDP increasing it by 135% to \$2.04 billion by 2029/2030¹. Employment in the kiwifruit industry is also expected to increase by 133% to 25,091 FTE by 2029/2030¹.

There are 2,582 orchards in the Bay of Plenty with an average size of 4.46ha.

3. Overall comments

While NZKGI supports the concept of safer roads, our view is that SH2 is unsafe because the road is no longer fit for purpose. It cannot sustain the increase of traffic caused by the population increase the Western Bay of Plenty has experienced over recent years and projected growth in the years to come.

The SH2 corridor connects Tauranga, Bay of Plenty and the Coromandel Peninsula to Auckland and is one of the Upper North Island key transport routes. The highway is a busy commuter, agribusiness, horticulture, freight and tourism route.

4. Region Growth

More than half of New Zealand's population lives in the combined areas of Auckland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty with 41% of NZ exports being sent from the Port of Tauranga²

Population and traffic volumes look set to significantly increase with an additional 43,000 houses being required in the Western Bay of Plenty by 2048 to cater for population growth³. The communities of Bethlehem, Omokoroa, Katikati and Waihi Beach are indicated to expand from 21,000 to 35,000 people by 2040. Consequently, as more vehicles travel this route, the efficiency and safety levels of services will further decline.

¹ Institute of Business Research, University of Waikato - The Economic Contribution of Kiwifruit Industry Expansion to the Bay of Plenty, Northland and New Zealand.

² <https://www.smartgrowthbop.org.nz/media/2079/fds-26-9-2018-notification-final-for-print-9mb.pdf>

³ <https://www.smartgrowthbop.org.nz/media/2079/fds-26-9-2018-notification-final-for-print-9mb.pdf>

5. Road Safety

There are more vehicles, including heavy freight vehicles, using this section of SH2 than ever before with the highway catering to a wide range of competing travel needs including cyclists and school children with limited provisions for public transport. There are ~ 700 orchards and ~seven post-harvest facilities between Katikati and Tauranga which result in increased traffic volumes during the peak harvest period of March - June and the shipping period of April - October including a significant amount of truck movements to the Port of Tauranga. This puts additional pressure on an already overcrowded and unsafe highway. Crashes on this route can cause extensive delays and long detours if there are road closures which impact on business profitability.

In the 10 years from 2009 to 2018, 27 people lost their lives and 77 were seriously injured in crashes between Katikati and Tauranga⁴ which led the AA, in 2018, to announce that SH2 between Katikati and Tauranga was one of New Zealand's most dangerous roads⁵. This is not unexpected due to the 43 intersections and over 100 driveways that have direct access onto the road that drivers need to consider

6. Speed Review

While the industry supports safer speeds, driving to the conditions and driving to the recommended speed limit it is the industry's view that the highway is no longer fit for purpose and will not sustain future growth without causing significant loss of life, harm and injury. The industry submits that if the Northern Link was built then there would be no requirement for the NZTA to spend valuable taxpayer dollars on a consultation to reduce speed limits on SH2.

Reducing speed limits to make a road safer assumes that all drivers obey the law and driving to the set speed limit. Unfortunately, this assumption should not be relied upon. Reducing speeds doesn't reduce the dangerous nature of the road itself, it only increases inefficiency and exacerbates traffic flow issues. The only feasible solution is to build the Northern Link.

7. Further discussion

NZKGI welcomes further discussion with the NZTA on the proposed speed review.

⁴ <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh2-katikati-to-tauranga-speed-consultation/>

⁵ https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11899543