

**Hon David Parker** BCom, LLB

Attorney-General

Minister for the Environment

Minister for Oceans and Fisheries

Minister of Revenue

Associate Minister of Finance



2020-B-07335

18 December 2020

Fiona McTavish  
Chief Executive  
Bay of Plenty Regional Council  
s 9(2)(a)

Dear Fiona McTavish

**COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-Track Consenting) Act 2020 – Port of Tauranga Stella Passage Wharves and Dredging Project – Comments sought**

In the week commencing 9 November 2020, the Minister for the Environment and the Minister of Conservation received an application from Port of Tauranga to refer the above project to an expert consenting panel for consideration under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (FTCA). The proposed project is located within the Bay of Plenty area.

The project is described as follows, and a copy of the application is attached.

**Port of Tauranga Stella Passage Wharves and Dredging Project**

The project is for extension of the Sulphur Point and Mount Maunganui wharves, and to carry out the associated reclamation and dredging of the seabed.

The purpose of this project is to increase the Port's capacity to manage growth in cargo volumes and vessel sizes without changing its overall footprint. The applicant states this will ensure the Port can continue to meet New Zealand's demand for export and import cargo volumes.

The Sulphur Point wharf, on the west side of the channel, will be extended by approximately 385 metres and will require 1.8 hectares reclamation. The Mount Maunganui wharf, on the east side, will be extended by approximately 920 metres and will require 2.9 hectares reclamation.

The seabed in the shipping channel between the wharves will be dredged to accommodate the increase in shipping that will be enabled by the wharf extensions. The area covers 14.4 hectares and involves up to 1,800,000 cubic metres of dredged material, of which 5.9 hectares and 800,000 cubic metres is already consented.

On behalf of myself and the Minister of Conservation, I invite you to provide written comments on the proposed project pursuant to section 21(2) of the FTCA (a template is attached for this purpose). Comment is sought on the specific matters outlined in the table below, and any further information you consider relevant to our decision on whether to refer the project to an expert consenting panel. If it is more efficient to discuss this application, please contact our team at [fasttrackconsenting@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:fasttrackconsenting@mfe.govt.nz) and they will make themselves available for a discussion with you.

Specific questions on the application
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Are there any reasons that you consider it more appropriate for the project, or part of the project, to proceed through existing Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) consenting processes rather than the processes in the FTCA?</li><li>2. Does the applicant, or a company owned by the applicant, have any environmental regulatory compliance history in your region?</li></ol>



Also note that if we decide to refer the project to a panel, you will have the opportunity to nominate a local authority representative (who could be a councillor or independent hearings commissioner) to sit on the panel and determine the application. Applicants will provide a detailed assessment of environmental effects at this next stage and you will have the opportunity to provide further comments to the panel. The Ministry for the Environment has prepared guidance on local authority involvement with fast-track consenting projects which you can access on the Ministry for the Environment website.

Please provide your comments via return email within 10 working days so that we can take your comments into consideration when deciding on the application.

Yours sincerely



Hon David Parker  
**Minister for the Environment**

Enclosures:

- A. Application to refer the Port of Tauranga Stella Passage Wharves and Dredging Project to an expert consenting panel including supporting information
- B. Response template for written comments

cc: Julie Bevan, Policy and Planning Manager, Bay of Plenty Regional Council,  
s 9(2)(a)