

Subject: FW: Submission re targeted roading rate
Attachments: 16.05.24 - Submission to Waitomo District Council.docx

From: Natalie [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, May 16, 2024 3:15 PM
To: Mayor <Mayor@waitomo.govt.nz>; Allan Goddard <allan.goddard@waitomo.govt.nz>; Janene New <Janene.New@waitomo.govt.nz>; Janette Osborne <Janette.Osborne@waitomo.govt.nz>; Gavin Todd <Gavin.Todd@waitomo.govt.nz>; Eady Manawaiti <Eady.Manawaiti@waitomo.govt.nz>; Daniel Tasker <Dan.Tasker@waitomo.govt.nz>
Subject: Submission re targeted roading rate

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am emailing you to make a submission re the proposed increase to the roading rate - it is below and attached. I have to email as the online submission form will not allow me to make comment on a single issue. While I live outside of the Waitomo District I am affected by this proposal as a holder of forestry units in the district.

I am grateful for the opportunity to make my views known and thank you for considering my views.

Kind regards
Natalie Kirton

Submission to Waitomo District Council - 16 May 2024

Proposal: Introduce a targeted or differential rate on the District Roding Rate

Forestry vehicles cause damage to local roads as they transport logs across the district, however, forestry properties do not pay for this additional damage in their rates. We are proposing to introduce a targeted or differential rate on the District Roding Rate to recover some of the costs of repairing roads damaged by forestry vehicles.

To the Mayor and Councillors of Waitomo District Council

I wish to make a submission in opposition to the proposed increase in roading charges to be applied to forestry operations. While roading is clearly a significant part of Council's budget, both in capital and operating expenditure, and the need to generate funds in these challenging times is apparent, I feel that the proposal is not balanced or reasonable.

My reasons for opposing this are as follows:

1. Your proposal notes that damage is caused 'as they transport logs across the district'. However, your proposal appears to be an annual charge, whether or not logs are being harvested - forestry owners will pay the charge for the approximately 30 years trees are growing while only impacting the roading network for the brief period during which trees are being removed.

I understand that Greenplan Forestry for example will use only 37 kilometres of roads for all forestry blocks over the next 20 years, some blocks using less than 1.5 kilometres of local roads during the extraction process lasting only several months, yet will be penalised with significant charges for the full period.

2. This increase appears to be targeted at operations with less than 51% of properties in pasture. Surely, if 'forestry' is considered to be putting undue demand on the roading budget, all forestry operations using public roads should be equally rated.

3. One could also ask why forestry is being penalised for the damage done by large and heavy vehicles, while other operations using comparable vehicles (dairy companies, farming operations, stock transport companies and the like) are not being targeted.

4. The costs involved in this industry must be balanced by the benefits it brings to the district and local communities. These benefits are environmental, social and financial. I understand that upward of 40 workers/contractors are employed by Waitomo forestry companies themselves, with local sawmills adding another 70 or so employees, so the contribution to local employment is considerable.

Companies are careful about avoiding environmental damage and reinstate land used for forestry when harvesting is complete. It is also frequently land which is unsuitable for pastoral farming so the choice becomes unproductive land, production forestry or carbon forestry - the latter having a devastating effect on communities as farming, schooling, banking, medical, and commercial ventures are withdrawn through lack of people.

While it cannot be denied that forestry places considerable demand on local roading for brief periods, it does not seem that this proposed rating change is equitable or reasonable. Having a targeted rate which is applied during harvesting, and expanding the increase across all sectors using the network seems much more appropriate and fair.

I ask that the proposal be reconsidered and more widely promoted and consulted on than has happened during this process.

Thank you for your consideration of this submission.

Natalie Kirton

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