

# SOUTHLAND CONSERVATION BOARD

TE ROOPU ATAWHAI O MURIHIKU

## SUBMISSION:

### PROPOSED VARIATIONS TO THE OTAGO SOUTHLAND LAND TRANSPORT PLANS 2015 -2021

#### To:

Environment Southland  
North Road  
Invercargill  
service@es.govt.nz

#### Submitter details

This submission is from the **Southland Conservation Board**.

The Board **does wish** to be heard in support of its submission in person.

#### Submission

The Southland Conservation Board's interests are set out in the Conservation Act 1987. Section 6N 2(a) empowers a board to

*"...advocate its interests at any public forum or in any statutory planning process".*

The Board wishes to submit on three matters:

- 1. The Board seeks greater recognition of the potential adverse impacts of road construction and maintenance on the environment, in particular native biodiversity.**
  - 1.1 There is no planning for new roads and associated infrastructure to be built on Conservation Lands, e.g. National Parks, Conservation Parks and Stewardship Lands in the RLTP. The Board supports this policy position.
  - 1.2 The Board would also support greater recognition of native biodiversity that exists on existing road corridors. Recent spraying of harakeke (NZ flax) beside roads in Southland was very controversial, showing the value the public places on this sort of vegetation. Where road safety

improvements are needed, or road maintenance if undertaken, the removal of native vegetation alongside the road should be avoided if possible.

## **2. Risks to travelers and encouraging use of busses.**

- 2.1 The Board supports planning to reduce the risk to travelers on the main tourist routes. It suggests that this planning needs to consider ways to reduce the numbers of cars and campervans, and encouraging visitors to utilize buses, where these numbers are affecting the quality of the visitor experience and affecting the qualities of the places they are visiting.

## **3. The Te Anau-Milford highway**

- 3.1 The Board notes the expectation in the Plan that vehicle numbers will continue to increase on this route. The Board notes that this seems to be an expectation driven by the tourist industry, and accepted without question by Environment Southland. However the Board questions the sustainability of this.
- 3.2 The Board has serious concerns about the capacity of the infrastructure at Milford to accept this extra traffic (once it has traversed the highway), especially cars and camper vans. Space at Milford for any development is at a premium and this includes space for parking. Pressure is necessitating the development of secondary parking e.g. at 'Little Tahiti'. Other parks (e.g. the Chasm) are regularly full and there are limits to the extent which 'another parking area' can be added in such locations.
- 3.3 The Board is tending to the view that if the Milford visit is to remain a high-quality visitor experience in an iconic environment for increasing numbers of people, then sooner or later controls on vehicle numbers will be needed. This may well imply a long-term change to 'park and ride' for the majority of visitors as a strategic direction.

Yours sincerely

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