

Our Ref: ADM20

8 August 2012

Hon. Gerry Brownlee
Minister of Transport
Freepost 18 888
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON 6160

Dear Minister

EAST COAST RAIL SERVICE

Thank you for your courtesy in acknowledging our correspondence and providing your comments, on this issue.

We are however, seriously concerned at the time that has elapsed without resolution, since this matter was precipitated by the disastrous washout on the Napier-Gisborne line, in March of this year.

Correspondence with you, seeking retention of the line, was initiated on 3 May 2012, backed by support from the Hawke's Bay Mayors and Regional Council Chairman and supported by the separate initiatives of Gisborne District Mayor Meng Foon.

I wrote to you further in detail, on 27 June.

KiwiRail itself reported on 13 April assessment of the damage repair cost of \$3.3 to \$4.3 million and 5 months to repair.

Anecdotally we are advised that the matter is now in Government's hands with detailed information in Government's possession.

This matter needs to be urgently resolved –

- To allow time for repairs to be effected enabling the summer peak freight demand to be re-established and serviced;
- Or – in the unfortunate event of support not proceeding, to enable freight dependent businesses in Gisborne and Hawke's Bay to plan for alternative and severely limited transport options.

We reiterate the crucial reasons for support to re-open the line –

- KiwiRail was on the cusp of financial viability of this service, resulting from effective marketing and infrastructure improvements enabling the carrying of fully loaded Highcube containers;
- The highly export dependent economies of Gisborne and Hawke's Bay were gaining competitive advantage through effective rail/road competition and modal choice.

- State Highway 2 – Napier to Gisborne is challenged by geography and geology. It will always be a difficult secondary road, with present hazards and congestion increasing with predicted growth of heavy traffic.

This relatively isolated part of New Zealand is an engine room of our primary industry dominated national economy and so must retain a strategically effective transportation system.

We request your urgent advice on this matter, - with favourable resolution being a result that will be received with gratitude by the people of Hawke's Bay and Gisborne/East Coast.

Yours sincerely



**Councillor Alan Dick QSO
Chairman Hawke's Bay Regional Transport Committee**

Copy to:

Prime Minister – Rt Hon. John Key
Hon. Chris Tremain
Hon. Craig Foss
Hon. Anne Tolley
Hon. Parekura Horomia
Mayor Meng Foon, Gisborne District Council
Mayor Les Probert, Wairoa District Council
Mayor Barbara Arnott, Napier City Council
Mayor Lawrence Yule, Hastings District Council
Mayor Peter Butler, Central Hawke's Bay District Council
Chairman Fenton Wilson, Hawke's Bay Regional Council
Mr Murray Douglas, CEO Hawke's Bay Chamber of Commerce and Business Hawke's Bay
Mr Jim Quinn, CEO KiwiRail
Mrs Jenny Chetwynd, NZTA