



BUILDING AND MAINTAINING
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INFRASTRUCTURE

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Committee Secretariat
Transport and Industrial Relations Select Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Dear Mr Mitchell,

Submission on Infrastructure Bill

Roothing New Zealand thanks the Government for the opportunity to make a submission on the above Bill. Roothing New Zealand also congratulates the Government for seeking ways to lift New Zealand's national productivity and to improve New Zealand's future economic growth through this Bill.

Roothing New Zealand represents contractors who build and maintain New Zealand's land transport infrastructure. While our members carry out the majority of the country's roading work, they are also substantially involved in utility, rail and passenger transport infrastructure. The combined turnover of our members is approximately \$3 billion per annum. Roothing New Zealand members have a direct interest in this Bill firstly as those who build and maintain the country's roading network and secondly as those who carry out the installation and maintenance of utility infrastructure on behalf of utility operators. While Roothing New Zealand is not a member of the New Zealand Utilities Advisory Group (NZUAG) we have had some limited input into the development of NZUAG's proposed Code of Practice.

In summary we support the proposed Bill in principle, but suggest that it be strengthened to align it better with the Government's current objectives of economic growth and productivity. We believe that these objectives will be enhanced by;

- Strengthening the Bill's provisions to require even better integration and coordination between utility operators and corridor managers. We would like to see the Bill's provisions strengthened to require greater transparency of utility operators' forward work programmes and if necessary the bringing forward of their installation and maintenance programmes to ensure a totally coordinated approach involving all parties. We believe that this will reduce waste and reduce disruption to the road corridor users such as motorists, commercial vehicles, pedestrians and public transport users.

As contractors we see a lot of waste and motorist frustration caused by utility operators digging up the road corridor sometimes immediately following other road rehabilitation and surfacing works.

- Strengthening the Bill's provisions to require utility operators to have accurate "As Built Plans" available within one month of the completion of new and recently maintained utility equipment. We strongly believe that the Bill should hold utility operators accountable for the accurate location of their underground pipes and cables etc.

This is absolutely critical for enabling the contracting industry to protect the health and safety of those working around underground services and for it to reduce waste and rework. At present it is not uncommon for cables and pipes to be some metres away from that shown on the plans which cause contractors real problems when carrying out roadworks. We believe that if legislation makes the utility operator accountable for the accurate location of their underground equipment they will take the appropriate measures to ensure its accurate location.

- Strengthening the Bill's provisions to require corridor managers and utility operators working within the same corridor to have an Agreement in place within a year of the legislation coming into effect that covers the Bill's key requirements for a Code of Practice. These agreements should require consultation with the local contracting industry for any local issues.

We note that even though the Bill makes provision for Codes of Practice that meet the Bill's requirements to be approved by the Minister, there is no incentive or requirement to do so. Our experience is that no progress will be made in this area unless there is an equal incentive on all parties to do so within a specific time frame. Our suggestion will ensure that the critical issues between utility operators and corridor managers as set out in the Bill are covered while local conditions are taken into account.

We trust you find this submission helpful and we wish to speak to it during submission hearings.

Yours sincerely



Chris Olsen (FIPENZ)
Chief Executive