



6 October 2022

Committee Secretariat
Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee
Parliament Buildings, Wellington
Submitted via www.parliament.nz

Attention: Stuart Nash, Minister for Tourism

Tēnā Koutou,

Self-contained Motor Vehicles Legislation Bill

Rangitikei District Council (Council) thanks you for the opportunity to submit on the Self-contained Motor Vehicles Legislation Bill.

The location of the Rangitikei District, traversable on major routes including State Highway 1, State Highway 3, and the Taihape-Napier Road, and the stunning scenery our district has to offer, contribute to the attractiveness of freedom camping. The Rangitikei District has several locations that are used by freedom campers and Marton and Taihape are considered motorhome friendly by the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association.

Council has previously submitted on the discussion document *Supporting Freedom Camping in Aotearoa New Zealand* on 6 May 2021 and welcomes the development of legislation that seeks to promote sustainable freedom camping and improve regulatory responses.

Council notes that some concerns raised around freedom camping may relate to homelessness and agrees that this is not a matter to be addressed by regulation. Council reiterates the comment from our submission to the discussion document that Central Government should continue investment in reducing homelessness in our communities.

Council would like to make comments on the following matters associated with the Bill:

- Requirements for freedom camping to be in self-contained vehicles
- Regulatory system for self-contained vehicles
- Changes to infringement fees and process
- Transition timeframes.

Requirements for freedom camping to be in self-contained vehicles

Under the Freedom Camping Act 2011, non-self-contained freedom camping is permissible on Council land throughout the District, as Council does not currently have a Freedom Camping Bylaw to restrict freedom camping in any location. Council instead relies on the provisions in the Freedom Camping Act 2011 to manage the impact of freedom camping.

Under this Bill, the variety of accommodation options and overall capacity for overnight visitors within the District will be reduced unless Council chooses to adopt a Bylaw indicating locations where non-self-contained vehicles are permitted to freedom camp.

The investigation and creation of a Bylaw would require resource that is not currently available. While Council acknowledges the contestable funding available to support the transition, the limited timeframe given to investigate and prepare an application means that Council is not able to determine the level of need or prepare an application for the current funding round.

Council needs to first understand the impact the new approach to regulating freedom camping has on the Rangitikei before we will be able to determine whether a bylaw is required. Necessary investment in improvements or maintenance to facilities will also need to be quantified before a bylaw to allow non-self-contained vehicles in specified locations is implemented. Therefore, we recommend that funding for the creation of a bylaw is made available for the first 5 years after the Bill comes into effect.

Regulatory system for self-contained vehicles

As indicated in Council's submission to the discussion document, Council supports the establishment of a robust regulatory system for the certification of self-contained vehicles and expects this will support enforcement and increase confidence in the efficacy of the system.

Changes to infringement fees and process

Council agrees with the change to infringement fees, as the increased maximum infringement fee allows enforcement to reflect the severity of offences.

Council also supports the option for infringement notices to be supplied via email, which enables a more modern and timely enforcement process.

Transition timeframes

Council's 2021 submission stated a preference for a longer transition of up to four years, phasing out existing voluntary certifications as they expire. Council also suggested that non-self-contained vehicles have a year to attain certification to allow owners to understand the requirements and seek certification under the new authorities.

The transitional arrangements proposed create a window where owners of non-certified vehicles must seek certification of self-containment to camp on Council land, but certification authorities will not yet be authorised. If freedom campers seek voluntary certification in this

period, it would become invalid after a maximum of two years instead of the four-year renewal period for both the current and proposed systems. This appears to disadvantage those who seek to comply with legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on this Bill, and for considering our submission.

Ngā mihi



Andy Watson
Mayor of the Rangitīkei District

