

Hon Dr Nick Smith

Minister for the Environment



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Media Release

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Reform tackles costs, uncertainties and delays of RMA

Changes to the Resource Management Act will simplify and streamline processes without compromising environmental protections, Environment Minister Nick Smith says.

“The costs, uncertainty and delays of the current Act are adversely affecting New Zealand jobs, infrastructure, and productivity and causing economic frustrations for homeowners, small businesses and farmers. The reforms we are introducing in phase one will address these significant issues.”

Key elements of the reform package are:

- Removing frivolous, vexatious and anti-competitive objections
- Streamlining processes for projects of national significance
- Creating an Environmental Protection Authority
- Improving plan development and plan change processes
- Improving resource consent processes
- Streamlining decision making
- Improving workability and compliance
- Improving national instruments

“The Government is taking an innovative approach to major projects by increasing the input from local councils into a streamlined Board of Inquiry process. This recognises that major projects have both an important local and national dimension.

“These reforms have required a delicate rebalancing between the rights of people to participate in resource consent decision making, and to appeal decisions, and the need for efficient decision making.

“The Resource Management (Simplify & Streamline) Amendment Bill, which contains more than 100 amendments, will be introduced to Parliament in February and referred to the Environment and Local Government Select Committee for public submission and hearings.

“A further phase of reform of the RMA is planned addressing specific areas of concern covering aquaculture, the structure of the Environmental Protection Authority, fresh water management, and urban design and infrastructure issues.”

Media contact: Simon Beattie 04 817 8271 or 021 243 8271