

## Submission from Climate Justice Taranaki on the COVID-19 Response (Management Measures) Legislation Bill

Our group Climate Justice Taranaki (CJT) is appalled by the omnibus nature and very rushed process of the Bill.

The Bill affects 17 pieces of legislation and eight Ministries and departments.

Introduced on 28<sup>th</sup> September, it was opened for submissions for just five working days, closing on 5<sup>th</sup> October.

Our submission focuses only on Schedule 3 Part 2, the extension of the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 for a year till 8 July 2023.

The COVID-19 Fast-track Bill drew widespread criticisms when it was introduced in June 2020, including reservations and key advice from the [Climate Change Commission](#) and [the NZ Planning Institute](#), notably on the risks of exacerbating climate change impacts and eroding public participation.

Along with numerous other environmental and community groups, [CJT submitted on the Bill](#), expressing our serious concerns: *“We are strongly opposed to the fast-tracking of infrastructure projects by skipping standard resource consenting processes that could lock us into decades of environmental and social harm, with little if any benefit for those who are the most in need.”*

We are already seeing the ramifications of the Fast-track Act. Last week, we learned that the Environmental Protection Authority is processing the [consents application lodged jointly by Hiringa Energy and Ballance Agri-Nutrients](#) under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020. The project aims to establish a so-called green hydrogen hub in Kapuni, including new infrastructure for hydrogen production, storage, offtake and refuelling, and four colossal wind turbines. The project requires consents for land-use, water take and contaminant discharge, but without public notification. Despite CJT having submitted on the Fast-track Bill and the [MBIE Hydrogen Green Paper](#) (2019), we have not been invited to have a say on this project in our own rohe, because we are not listed under Schedule 6 section 17(6).

Hydrogen technology is an extremely wasteful way of using our energy (fossil fuels or renewables), money and time which we don't have in a climate emergency. The myth that it's a new, clean renewable energy has been debunked [twenty years ago](#) and with [growing evidence](#) from numerous engineers and scientists. Battery EVs are three times more energy efficient than hydrogen fuel cell EVs. The economic case is weak as it requires government and the [public to de-risk private investments](#) and to create resource draining market demands. Using hydrogen to make even more urea will drive industrial farming further, alongwith the devastating impacts on climate, waterways, soil and farmers, and lost opportunities to regenerate biodiversity and local communities. It is little more than a greenwashing and delay tactic by polluting industries like synthetic fertilisers and heavy trucking. Development of hydrogen technology such as storage and refueling stations involves new significant [hazardous facilities](#). We don't yet have clear and robust legislation or capacity to limit and manage [the risks](#) associated with it. The negative environmental and social consequence and economic burden of fast-tracking such a project is far reaching.

The Fast-track Act was only meant to be a short term piece of legislation. To extend it by another year, buried in an omnibus bill, rushed through Parliament in less than a week, is simply unacceptable.