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| Before the Independent Commissioners |  |
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| Under | the Resource Management Act 1991 |
| In the matter of | a hearing on submissions on the proposed Te Tai o Poutini Plan  Hearing Topics 1 and 2  Submitter: **WMS Group (HQ) Limited and WMS Land Co Limited (S599)**  Further Submitter: **West Coast Bulk Logistics (FS152)** |

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| Statement of Evidence of Michael Stewart |
| 2 October 2023 |
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**Introduction**

1. My name is Michael Stewart.
2. I am General Manager of West Coast Bulk Logistics, the logistics arm of WMS Group (HQ) Limited and WMS Land Co Limited (together **WMS**). I have authority to give evidence on behalf of WMS. I have more than 20 years' experience in logistics and operations in New Zealand and internationally, leading large and complex supply chain businesses.
3. The scope of my evidence is to demonstrate the significance of port infrastructure to the West Coast sand mining industry and to the West Coast region's economy. Ports must be recognised as critical infrastructure in the TTPP.

**West Coast transport and infrastructure**

1. The TTPP connections and resilience strategic direction recognises the importance of critical infrastructure to the resilience and economic development of the West Coast. In particular the TTPP strategic directions will enable transport connections to be protected and developed, while recognising the particular threat of climate change to these connections. WMS supports the strategic direction to improve resiliency and identifies the diversification of transport links as a way forward to achieve this.
2. At present the West Coast road network is vulnerable to significant disruption. Climate change increases the likelihood of extreme weather events, which could result in more slips and closures of key roading links. The West Coast is also particularly vulnerable to being cut off by road in the event of the Alpine Fault rupturing. With these risks in mind, WMS supports the development of the regions ports – Westport, Greymouth and Jackson Bay.
3. To ensure the success of its operations, WMS is committed to improving transport, logistics and supply chain networks in the West Coast. In particular, WMS is working to improve and strengthen shipping networks between the West Coast and the rest of the country.
4. Strengthening the West Coast's shipping networks will mitigate some of its current vulnerability, as well as creating opportunities for economic growth. Improving the shipping network will mean the region has a comprehensive suite of transport and logistics options, which will make it a more attractive, and secure, area for local and national businesses.
5. Mineral extraction is already a big industry in the West Coast, and it’s set to become more integral still. The ever-increasing need for good transport links to and from the region will support the expansion and improvement of Greymouth and Westport Ports, and the growth of Jackson Bay Port. These facilities have the potential to enable regional resilience and growth, and, if utilised to their full potential, could provide a robust alternative to the overland-only road and rail transport systems the West Coast is currently so reliant on.
6. Improving port infrastructure and operations will not just benefit the likes of WMS. An increase in shipping operations would likely result in more employment opportunities in the region. The Port operations would likely need at least 50 employees to manage the day to day running of the port, and on top of this there will be up to 20 stevedores per port needed to load vessels and stow cargo. There would also be a need for ancillary contractors to support the maintenance of the port itself and the vessels passing through. These kinds of employment opportunities will likely have the combined effect of encouraging people to stay and work in the region, as well as attracting people from other parts of the country to come and live and work on the West Coast. The benefits of this are varied and numerous; there will be more people living, working, and spending in the region, increasing the socio-economic performance of West Coast communities.
7. In the short to medium term, work will be required to upgrade the Greymouth and Westport ports. The following works are either underway or are planned to commence shortly:
   1. Upgrade wharf piling;
   2. deadman and bollard installation for the safe berthing of the vessel;
   3. increased hard standing areas for parking, loading, unloading and storage; and
   4. development of adjacent land (again, for parking, loading, unloading, storage and administration buildings etc.).
8. It is important that the TTPP recognises the importance of mining activity, as the industry will be key driver in the improvement and expansion of our critical infrastructure, which includes the ports. The development of the ports, and the consequent strengthening of the region's shipping network, is an integral factor in the continued expansion of business operations in the region. This will be critical to economic growth in the West Coast.

**Enabling connections**

1. The minerals that WMS is extracting have a number of uses, particularly in technology. With an increasing global focus on sustainability, and green technology, WMS anticipates that international demand for minerals is going to increase. To that end, mining on the West Coast is set to continue, and may indeed expand over the next ten years to meet growing international demand for rare earth elements. To meet demand, the West Coast needs resilient bulk transport connections to the international market. Without this, there will be little room to grow West Coast industries.

**Conclusion**

1. WMS supports the strategic direction of the TTPP to protect and develop resilient transport connections on the West Coast. WMS is committed to contribute to this strategic direction through the re-development of the West Coast's port infrastructure. This can only be beneficial for the West Coast region.

**Michael Stewart   
2 October 2023**