

Mahurangi East Residents and Ratepayers Association

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**Re proposed Waste Management Auckland Regional Landfill at Springhill Farm, Dome Valley. Inviting your support for a Waste-by Rail option.**

Omaha Community Group

Dear Committee Members

You will be aware of Beijing Capital Waste Management’s proposed new Auckland Regional Landfill south of Wellsford and efforts to stop its development based on environmental concerns; most notably the risk of leachate entering the Kaipara Harbour.

MERRA shares these concerns and will submit in support of the anti-leachate case to be made by Save the Dome and other groups when the consent application (lodged in May) is publically notified. This is likely to be early 2020.

However given the powerful needs and interests at play, history suggests a reasonable likelihood that these environmental concerns may be mitigated to Council’s satisfaction with approval following.

Our further concern, should the landfill be approved, is that it will generate upwards of 740[[1]](#footnote-1) vehicle movements per day on State Highway One and through the notorious Dome Valley. 520 of these movements (most ex urban Auckland) will be heavy vehicles carrying bulk waste. The remaining 220 vehicles will be a mixture of light vehicles and heavier delivery and service vehicles. On site logging operations will add more.

Numbers are forecast to grow through to 2060, particularly as other landfill consents expire and other centres’ waste streams are added. The heavy vehicles (particularly those doing bulk line-haul) will run seven days a week all year… at peak times this will mean one additional truck every two minutes past a given point[[2]](#footnote-2). We estimate landfill traffic will result in a 60% increase to current daily heavy vehicle counts in the Dome Valley[[3]](#footnote-3). The trucks will be diesel powered (not electric as some politicians have falsely suggested).

MERRA argues that this is environmentally unacceptable from a fuel-burn/emissions perspective alone. MERRA estimate these vehicles will burn c 17 tonnes of diesel daily.

Additionally like us, your community depends on SH1 to access vital services such as hospitals. We would be the victims of the increased congestion, higher accident rates, noise, vibration and road surface damage that would follow. The impact during holiday periods and over summer is daunting (but conspicuously glossed over in consent materials).

MERRA has received strong support for its argument that Council should not approve the proposed landfill unless both leachate/water quality **AND** transport/emission matters are adequately addressed.

Our argument is that rail transport of waste should be integral to any future Dome Valley landfill consent.

This reflects the fact that:

* The much under-used North Auckland rail line passes within 2km of the proposed landfill site.
* The mothballing of the Warkworth to Te Hana motorway project means the slow and historically dangerous Dome Valley section of SH1 will remain in use for the foreseeable future. It will bear the brunt of a staggering 60% increase in heavy vehicle movements.
* The government has just announced a $95 million upgrade of the North Auckland rail line to enable safer and faster passage of freight trains.
* This upgrade may be the fillip that Kiwirail needs to support a waste-by-rail option.
* Waste Management remains open to a waste-by-rail option.
* Further upgrade of tunnels and spur lines (eg to Northport Whangarei) have been recently recommended by a Government Supply Chain working group with a final report due shortly.
* Waste by rail would give critical, reliable return on investment for the Government/Kiwirail.
* There is an obvious fit with both Government and Auckland Council environmental and transport policies and goals including Councils recent declaration of a ‘climate emergency’ and the Prime Ministers ‘climate change’ statements on global stages.
* Rail is 65% more fuel efficient than road transport and has a proven electrification option.
* Rail accident rates are 95% less than road transport.
* Each train means over 50 trucks off the road.
* Waste is an ideal and cost effective rail cargo; easily containerised, single point discharge, standardised weight/texture, non-time-critical (ie: could travel outside commuter peaks and at night)
* There is good international precedent for waste-by-rail (eg London, Seattle).
* There is a suitable site for off-loading (or connection for a short spur line) at the former Wayby Station yard. This is under 3km by road from the proposed landfill site and likely within easy reach for the electric shuttle trucks Waste Management proposes to use to move waste on site.
* Closer to source truck-to-rail transfer sites could be provided at various urban or rural fringe sites on the Auckland rail network and also potentially as part of the ‘inland ports’ likely to be recommended as part of the imminent Auckland-Northport-Tauranga ports strategy.

As we prepare our submission and develop our case we would welcome your views and support.

We would appreciate you replying to us indicating

* Whether your committee supports the position MERRA outlines above (and at <https://scottslanding.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/MERRA-Waste-by-Rail-to-Dome-Valley-case-revised.pdf> )?
* Any feedback or comment your committee might have for us?
* Whether you would be interested in actively supporting MERRA’s work on this?

We look forward to your response

**Warm regards**

**Stuart Windross**

**MERRA Committee**

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1. Figures from Waste Management consent application documents. Earlier estimates were c900 movements. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Again WMNZ’s own figures estimate c 110 additional vehicle movements in the morning peak alone. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Current Dome Valley heavy vehicle counts are c1000 per day with 1400 projected for 2025/6 (NZTA). The addition of 520 heavy waste carriers and say 100 other non-waste trucks (a conservative proportion of the other 220 service vehicles and c40 logging trucks): 620/1000 = 62% [↑](#footnote-ref-3)