



21 February 2025

Hon Cameron Brewer
Finance and Expenditure Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Tēna koutou

RE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WATER SERVICES) BILL

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Local Government (Water Services) Bill. This submission reflects the views of Engineering New Zealand. Engineering New Zealand represents over 23,000 engineers, with some of its members working in the water services sector.

We consider that this Bill is a step in the right direction for a safe and adequate water supply for New Zealand. We support efforts to deliver safe, reliable and financially sustainable water services.

We have comments in three main areas, namely:

- The Bill's inclusion of the development of national standards
- Support for Water New Zealand's submission
- More integration with other Government reforms.

National Standards

We strongly support the development of the proposed infrastructure design solutions and National Engineering Design Standards. These standards should help reduce costs, improve outcomes and consistency of critical water infrastructure across New Zealand. We look forward to supporting Taumata Arowai in developing these standards.

Water New Zealand's Submission

Engineering New Zealand endorses the submission of [Water New Zealand](#), which helps support the intent of this Bill. We particularly echo their points on:

1. **Potential to reduce complexity and compliance costs.** The Bill, in its current form, is highly detailed and complex, which risks unnecessary compliance costs and administrative burdens for water services providers. A more streamlined legislative approach – aligning where possible with

existing frameworks such as the Local Government Act, might reduce duplication, improve clarity, and enable a more flexible and cost-effective regulatory environment.

2. **The need for broader and stronger objectives for water service providers.** The Bill's objectives are, in our view, too narrow and fail to account for key responsibilities. A broader set of objectives would help ensure consistency across all water service providers, including supporting housing growth, ensuring the safety of all water services (drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater), and alignment with Government's wider infrastructure goals.

Simplification of wording/terms in the Bill

In addition, we would like to see the Bill simplified wherever possible. It is a complex Bill that would benefit from more simplified language and the use of consistent terms – aligning where appropriate with other legislation (ie. transport corridor, consumer).

Integration with wider Government reforms

On a broader level, Engineering New Zealand is interested in the integration with the wider reform environment. There are many concurrent or announced reform processes that are connected to each other. Many of these are managed by different Ministries or Ministerial portfolios.

We could support a more systemic and strategic approach. This would help mitigate any risk that changes from individual reforms are not aligned and lead to unintended consequences. For example, the interaction between the water reforms and the existing legislation, such as the Resource Management Act, highlights the need for better coordination to ensure a cohesive and effective reform programme.

Conclusion

Engineering New Zealand appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback.

If we can be of any assistance or provide further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Nāku, nā



Dr Richard Templer

Chief Executive