



# THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

**MEDIA RELEASE – 21 February 2024**

## **West Coast Mayors, Chairs, and Iwi ministerial briefing to new government**

Regional leaders from West Coast Councils, Iwi and Development West Coast have prepared a ministerial briefing document for the new government outlining several key areas to support the West Coast's future economic growth.

At a regional development briefing in December, Mayors from Buller, Westland, and Grey District Councils, as well Chairs from the West Coast Regional Council, Iwi Chairs, and Development West Coast discussed how incoming regulatory and policy changes could assist with supporting the region's economic growth and investment through strategic development and resource utilisation.

West Coast Regional Council Chair Peter Haddock said the recommendations outlined in the ministerial briefing document highlighted the region's potential to increase productivity and sustainable growth.

"The West Coast faces unique challenges as a region, we have a very small rating base of 22,000, a critical need for greater infrastructure resilience and the need to diversify our revenue streams while promoting sustainable practices,"

West Coast leaders are asking the new government to recognise the West Coast's future growth by supporting several key development areas pivotal to regional growth.

Mr Haddock says critical infrastructure upgrades in flood protection and transport links to ensure resilience against natural disasters and support economic growth were essential as well as streamlining land use regulatory processes that hindered investment and development.

"To increase our economic diversification, we need to streamline regulatory barriers to land and natural resource use, simplifying key amendments to the Crown Minerals Act and Conservation Estate land classification and regulatory processes for obtaining approvals,"

"Supporting renewable energy projects such as the Waitaha Hydro Scheme and sustainable timber recovery would also ensure economic development initiatives for the future."

“All involved in the briefing are united in their desire to have a strong and productive working relationship with the new government and to take opportunities to address long term responses to economic and significant natural hazards challenges that the region faces.”

Mr Haddock said the next step was to engage with Ministers and senior government officials in person and a delegation of West Coast representatives will meet with ministers in Wellington as soon as possible.

An invitation has also been extended to the Prime Minister and associated ministers to visit the West Coast to experience the opportunities the region provides first hand.

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