

29 September 2009

Hamilton East
HAMILTON 3216

Dear ---,

Thank you for your correspondence regarding a commuter train link between Hamilton and Auckland.

There has been some interest in this service and I want to give you an update of some of the issues involved.

Any potential service would have the following problems:

First, the main trunk line from Hamilton to Auckland is not electrified. Therefore, any service on this line would be a diesel not electric train and so there is likely to be no environmental advantage in using rail as an option. Over time this link would potentially have environmentally negative consequences to the road option where more efficient and cleaner vehicles would be used.

Secondly, the Waikato region has received one of the biggest roading packages in the country with completion of the Waikato Expressway. This is a huge project and it simply wouldn't be in the Waikato's best interest to advocate for a competing use of funds and thereby jeopardise the biggest project central government can do for our region.

Thirdly, the nature of use of the Auckland rail network means the train can not access the Britomart terminal. That terminal is basically at capacity at peak times so in effect the train can't reach its final destination.

Fourthly, the best approach is a multi-model solution that is driving to the outskirts of Auckland on the expressway and from there use Park and Ride alternatives to get into the city. This would be cheaper than travel from Hamilton by train. It would give commuters choice on travel times as the Auckland trains run much more regularly and would accommodate commuters travel times. Also it would mean avoiding the congestion on the Auckland southern motorway.

Overall, the above issues need to be considered when debating this potential service.

Yours sincerely,

David Bennett
MP for Hamilton East