

13 February 2026

Committee Secretariat
Environment Committee
Parliament Buildings
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Retail NZ submission: Planning Bill

Overview

1. Retail NZ is a membership organisation that represents the views and interests of New Zealand's retail sector. We are the peak body representing retailers across Aotearoa, with our membership accounting for nearly 70% of all domestic retail turnover. New Zealand's retail sector comprises approximately 30,000 businesses and employs around 227,000 Kiwis.
2. Retail NZ consulted our membership in the preparation of this submission.
3. Retail NZ is generally supportive of the goals and expected outcomes of the Bill, to simplify the planning process and create greater certainty for those wanting to undertake building work.

Recommendations

4. Retail NZ supports a fast transition to a new regime for business certainty, but the target of having the new consenting system fully operational by 2029 is ambitious. We recommend these timeframes be reviewed.
5. Clause 11 (Goals): the absence of hierarchy between the goals may create both opportunities and uncertainty depending on the context. We recommend the direction on this be set in the Bill itself, to provide clarity on how competing objectives and outcomes will be prioritised.
6. Clause 14 (Effects): We support the use of the list of matters a person considering the effects of an activity must disregard.
7. Clause 15 (Adverse effects): We support limiting the range of effects that can be considered. It should be clear that the effects assessed are those that remain after proposed mitigation.
8. The Bill proposes one document (National Policy Direction (NPD)) and national standards to provide high-level direction for council planning. For common forms of activity, such as retail, it makes sense to have a national regime with these activities being permitted (subject to meeting standards).
 - a. We support that there is a full public consultation process for substantial proposals to develop or amend national instruments, and Retail NZ requests early consultation with the industry.

- b. We also recommend that national instrument limits are set with a strong scientific basis to ensure resource use is not unnecessarily constrained and allows options for local communities to best manage resource use to ensure the best economic, environmental, social and cultural outcomes for their region.
9. Spatial Plans: Plans are to have a 30+ year horizon and Retail NZ supports this. However, having a spatial plan notified within 6 months after the first National Policy Direction seems to be insufficient time. Therefore, we recommend the timeframe be extended for this process.
10. We support simplifying and speeding up consents.
11. We support that private plan changes will continue to be allowed.
12. We support a planning tribunal to be established to provide a fast and cost-effective way for resolving lower-level disputes between system users and local authorities.
13. Contributions are not considered under the Bill and “development levies” will begin to replace development contributions from July 2028 as part of Government reform to the Local Government Act (LGA). We support that development levies are provided for in the LGA, and there is no duplication with this Bill.

Conclusion

14. Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission. Retail NZ generally supports the Planning Bill proceeds, with the changes expected to simplify and standardise the planning and consents process for retailers, and therefore, increase certainty for business owners. We would like the committee to consider our recommendations, which would mean even greater clarity, and more achievable timeframes
15. Retail NZ is happy to discuss any aspect of this submission further.
16. No part of this submission should be withheld under the OIA.

Sincerely,



Carolyn Young

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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