



Save the Northland Rail Line



The Northland to Auckland rail line is under threat of closure.

Kiwirail has been directed by the government to consult on the future of the line in 2011.

They will decide whether or not to close it by mid-2012.

Why close the line?

Right now the Northland to Auckland rail line only carries enough freight to cover its running costs (\$8-9 million/year) but not its maintenance costs (\$3-5 million/year).

Due to years of neglect, the line is in a poor state. It takes 5 hours for a freight train to go from Auckland to Whangarei (vs. 2.5 hours by road).

It would cost \$100million to upgrade the line to make it faster and get it into a fit state to carry new, large, modern containers. To extend rail to Marsden B Port would cost \$120million more.

Why keep the line open?

If we mothball the Northland to Auckland rail line it will soon become unusable as thieves steal the metal from the tracks. Northland will lose a valuable community asset forever.

Rail is a more energy efficient way to transport freight than by trucks. As the price of oil rises and the risk of climate change increases, we must find more sustainable ways to move goods.

Rail is also a safer way to carry freight. If the Northland to Auckland rail line closes there will be more big trucks on State Highway 1 and more crashes.

The government wants to spend \$1.7billion building an entirely new four-lane highway between Puhoi and Wellsford. They should cancel this expensive project.

Instead, they should spend \$220million on upgrading the Northern line so it can carry more freight, faster and more efficiently, directly to Marsden B Port.