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## **End of the line for Auckland's light rail**

The Government's withdrawal of its twin track Auckland Light Rail project is to be congratulated, Road Transport Forum (RTF) chief executive Nick Leggett says.

"It's a gutsy move, but it's the right one, and I congratulate the Government on this decision," Leggett says.

"The estimated cost of \$6 billion, if not more, for this project means the country cannot afford it. We are calling for this figure to now be transferred to more mainstream roading capacity improvements around Auckland. Roading projects can have a more immediate impact on reducing congestion and improve safety.

"Auckland is our largest regional economy and the rest of New Zealand requires it to be as productive as possible. Traffic gridlock costs time and money for all Aucklanders. Freight stopped in traffic adds to the cost of everybody's shopping bill.

"Unfortunately, Auckland Light Rail has proven hard to roll out and costs are always underestimated as the current City Rail Link debacle shows.

"The RTF has always been sceptical that the project cancelled today would provide the level of service that would transfer enough people from their cars to markedly reduce congestion in Auckland.

"Two of the Government parties clearly wish to pursue this and will be able to put it to the electorate at the September general election," Leggett says.

Given today's announcement, Leggett suggested the Government should actively consider the funding of Auckland's East-West Link, which was missed out of the \$12 billion infrastructure package announced by the Government earlier this year.

### **For more information contact:**

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### **About Road Transport Forum New Zealand (RTF)**

RTF provides unified national representation for several regional trucking associations. RTF members include Road Transport Association NZ, National Road Carriers, and NZ Trucking Association. The affiliated representation of the RTF is about 3,000 individual road transport companies which in turn, operate

16-18,000 trucks involved in road freight transport, as well as companies that provide services allied to road freight transport.

The road freight transport industry employs 32,868 people (2.0% of the workforce), has a gross annual turnover of \$6 billion, and transports 93% of the total tonnes of freight moved in New Zealand.