

Proposed National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmissionⁱ

Preamble

This proposed National Policy Statement sets out the objective and policies for managing the electricity transmission network under the Resource Management Act 1991.

The efficient transmission of electricity on the national grid plays a vital role in the well-being of New Zealand, its people and the environment. Electricity transmission has special characteristics that create challenges for its management under the Resource Management Act. These include:

- transporting electricity efficiently over long distances requires pylons, conductors (wires) and cables that create significant environmental effects
- the transmission network is extensive and linear, making it important that where possible there are consistent policy and regulatory approaches by local authorities
- the linear character of the transmission network can limit the extent that it is feasible to avoid adverse environmental effects
- the environmental effects of the transmission network are often local – while the benefits extend beyond the local to the regional and national – making it important that those exercising powers and functions under the Resource Management Act balance local, regional and national environmental effects
- extensive investment in the transmission network and significant upgrades are expected to be required to supply demand for electricity and to meet the Government's objectives for a renewable energy future.

Objective

To recognise the national significance of the electricity transmission network.

Policy 1

The benefits of sustainable, secure and efficient electricity transmission relevant to any particular project or development of the electricity transmission network may include:

- i) improved security of supply of electricity
- ii) improved efficiencies in the supply of electricity
- iii) the facilitation of new and existing renewable electricity generation
- iv) lower overall environmental costs from the generation of electricity.

Policy 2

The electricity transmission network should be operated, maintained and upgraded efficiently.

Policy 3

Corridors and sites should be located and other activities associated with the electricity transmission network should be undertaken in a way that avoids, remedies or mitigates any adverse effects on matters of national importance.ⁱⁱ

Policy 4

Any new developmentⁱⁱⁱ that is sensitive to the effects of the electricity transmission network should be managed in a way that does not compromise efficient operation of the electricity transmission network.

Policy 5

Where maps are included in a plan, these should identify the existing electricity transmission network, whether or not it is designated.

Policy 6

Provisions dealing with electric and magnetic fields (EMF) associated with the electricity transmission network should be based on the ICNIRP^{iv} guidelines.

Explanatory note

The proposed National Policy Statement will not detract from, or override, the responsibilities of local authorities to ensure that all relevant environmental effects are appropriately considered in carrying out their functions under the Resource Management Act 1991.

The proposed National Policy Statement will not override the Resource Management Act or any other legislation. The proposed National Policy Statement should be read together with other relevant planning documents, including the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

The National Policy Statement will apply to all persons exercising functions and powers under the Resource Management Act. The provisions of the National Policy Statement will be included in documents pursuant to section 55(2A)(b) of the Resource Management Act.

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- i 'Electricity transmission network' and 'electricity transmission' mean, the national grid* of transmission lines and cables (aerial, underground and undersea, including the high voltage direct current link), stations and substations and other works used to connect grid injection points and grid exit points to convey electricity throughout the North and South Islands of New Zealand. *'National grid' means, the assets used or owned by Transpower NZ Ltd.
- ii The Resource Management Act (section 6) states that 'Matters of national importance' are:
- (a) The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:
 - (b) The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:
 - (c) The protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna:
 - (d) The maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes, and rivers:
 - (e) The relationship of Maori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga:
 - (f) The protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:
 - (g) The protection of recognised customary activities.
- iii Not related to the electricity transmission network.
- iv International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). Guidelines for limiting exposure to time-varying electric, magnetic and electromagnetic fields (up to 300 GHz). *Health Physics* 1998, 74(4): 494–522.