

BRF-2853

Steve Ruru
Chief Executive
Taranaki Regional Council
s 9(2)(a)

Dear Steve Ruru

COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 – comments sought on referral application Harmony Energy Solar Farm–Opunake Project

The Minister for the Environment (the Minister) has received an application from Harmony Energy #4 Limited to refer Harmony Energy Solar Farm–Opunake Project (project) to an expert consenting panel (panel) for consideration under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (FTCA).

The project is described in Appendix A and the application documents are in Attachment 1.

Under delegated authority from the Minister and pursuant to section 21(2) of the FTCA, I invite Taranaki Regional Council to provide written comments on the referral application. A template is provided for this purpose in Attachment 2. Comment is sought on the specific matters outlined in the table below, and on any other matter you consider relevant to the Minister's decision on whether or not to accept the applications.

Specific questions on the application
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Are there any reasons that you consider it more appropriate for the project, or part of the project, to proceed through existing Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) consenting processes rather than the processes in the FTCA?2. Does the applicant, or a company owned by the applicant, have any environmental regulatory compliance history in your region?

The above information is provided to you in confidence and as part of the statutory process set out in the FTCA. Please do not forward the application or request for comments to anyone outside your organisation.

If the Minister accepts the application and the project is referred to a panel, Taranaki Regional Council will have the opportunity to nominate a local authority representative (who could be a councillor or independent hearings commissioner) to sit on the panel and determine the RMA

approvals for the project. The applicant will provide a detailed assessment of environmental effects and cultural impact assessments at this stage and the council will have the opportunity to provide further comments to the panel.

Please provide comments via return email within 10 working days to ensure that the Minister takes them into consideration when making his decision. Note that the Minister is not required to consider any comments provided after this time.

If it is more efficient for you to discuss the applications, please contact the Ministry for the Environment's Fast-track Consenting Team at fasttrackconsenting@mfe.govt.nz to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely



Rebecca Perrett
Acting Manager, Fast-track Consenting Team

Appendix:

- A. Details of proposed project

Attachments:

1. Application to refer the Harmony Energy Solar Farm–Opunake Project to an expert consenting panel, including supporting information (Databox link)
2. Response template for written comments

cc: Colin McLellan
Consents Manager
s 9(2)(a)

Appendix A – Details of proposed projects

Project	Applicant	Details
Harmony Energy Solar Farm - Opunake Project	Harmony Energy NZ #4 Limited	<p>The project is to construct and operate a solar farm on a 151-hectare site comprising 2 properties at 915 Ihaia Road, Opunake, Taranaki, and to connect to and supply electricity to the national grid. The solar farm will have an approximate installed capacity of 94.149 peak Megawatts.</p> <p>The solar farm will comprise: approximately 142,650 solar panels occupying approximately 58 hectares, arrays and mounting structures, inverter cabinets, and associated infrastructure, 26 power stations, two substations, one transformer and transmission line to connect to the national grid, underground electricity cables, ancillary buildings, structures and infrastructure (including a storage building, roads, access, security fencing, CCTV poles and other infrastructure) restoration and planting of wetlands and riparian margins of the Otahi Stream.</p>