



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Referred Projects (Harmony Energy Solar Farms) Amendment Order 2023

Portfolio Environment

On 6 June 2023, Cabinet:

- 1 **noted** that the Minister for the Environment (the Minister) has decided under section 24 of the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (the Act) to accept the applications for referral of the following projects to a panel:
 - 1.1 Harmony Energy NZ #3 Limited's Harmony Energy Solar Farm–Marton Project (the Marton Project);
 - 1.2 Harmony Energy NZ #4 Limited's Harmony Energy Solar Farm–Opunake Project (the Opunake Project);
 - 1.3 Harmony Energy NZ #2 Limited's Harmony Energy Solar Farm–Carterton Project (the Carterton Project);
- 2 **noted** that the Marton Project meets the eligibility criteria in section 18(3) of the Act, and will help achieve the Act's purpose, as required by section 18(2) of the Act, as it has the potential to:
 - 2.1 generate employment by creating approximately 87–130 direct full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs over a 12-18 month construction period and approximately five ongoing FTE jobs;
 - 2.2 provide infrastructure that will contribute to improving economic and employment outcomes;
 - 2.3 contribute to New Zealand's efforts to mitigate climate change and transition more quickly to a low emissions economy by increasing New Zealand's renewable energy generation;
 - 2.4 progress faster than would otherwise be the case under standard Resource Management Act 1991 process;

- 3 **noted** that the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Referred Projects (Harmony Energy Solar Farms) Amendment Order 2023 (the Amendment Order) requires Harmony Energy NZ #3 Limited to provide to an expert consenting panel a landscape and visual assessment of the proposed solar farm as more fully detailed in Appendix Three, attached to the submission under CAB-23-SUB-0211, which the Minister specified under section 24(2) of the Act and outlined in his notice of decision on the referral application for the project;
- 4 **noted** that the Amendment Order requires an expert consenting panel appointed to consider the Marton Project to seek comments from the seven parties listed in Appendix Three;
- 5 **noted** that the Opunake Project meets the eligibility criteria in section 18(3) of the Act, and will help achieve the Act's purpose, as required by section 18(2) of the Act, as it has the potential to:
- 5.1 generate employment by creating approximately 179–286 direct FTE jobs over a 12–18 month construction period and approximately 5 ongoing FTE jobs;
 - 5.2 provide infrastructure that will contribute to improving economic and employment outcomes;
 - 5.3 contribute to New Zealand's efforts to mitigate climate change and transition more quickly to a low emissions economy by increasing New Zealand's renewable energy generation;
 - 5.4 progress faster than would otherwise be the case under standard Resource Management Act 1991 process;
- 6 **noted** that the Amendment Order requires an expert consenting panel appointed to consider the Opunake Project to seek comments from the Minister of Energy and Resources, the Minister of Agriculture, and Transpower, as listed in Appendix Four, attached to the submission under CAB-23-SUB-0211;
- 7 **noted** that the Carterton Project meets the eligibility criteria in section 18(3) of the Act, and will help achieve the Act's purpose, as required by section 18(2) of the Act, as it has the potential to:
- 7.1 generate employment by creating approximately 202–303 direct FTE jobs over a 12–18 month construction period and approximately five ongoing FTE jobs;
 - 7.2 provide infrastructure that will contribute to improving economic and employment outcomes;
 - 7.3 contribute to New Zealand's efforts to mitigate climate change and transition more quickly to a low emissions economy by increasing New Zealand's renewable energy generation;
 - 7.4 progress faster using the Act's processes than would otherwise be the case under standard Resource Management Act 1991 processes;
- 8 **noted** that the Amendment Order requires an expert consenting panel appointed to consider the Carterton Project to seek comments from the five parties listed in Appendix Five, attached to the submission under CAB-23-SUB-0211;
- 9 **authorised** submission of the Amendment Order [PCO 25563/11.0] to the Executive Council;

- 10 **noted** that on 27 July 2020, Cabinet agreed to waive the standard 28-day rule relating to Orders in Council made under the Act [CAB-20-MIN-0353];
- 11 **noted** that the Amendment Order 2023 will come into force on 9 June 2023.

Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet