

14 March 2023

Madeline Berry
fasttrackconsenting@mfe.govt.nz

ref.16789.tk

To Madeline,

**RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION – ENERGY FARMS LIMITED –
MARTON SOLAR FARM PROJECT**

Introduction

1. We now have the information required to respond to request issued on 28/02/2023 for the Marton Solar Farm Project. Please see the response to each point below.

Sale and purchase agreement

2. A copy of the sale and purchase agreement is enclosed. This does not include any provisions that would delay the implementation of the project once consented.

Economic assessment

3. A copy of the economic assessment is enclosed. This outlines the range of economic benefits associated with the project and concludes that the proposal meets the economic intent of the fast track legislation.

Shapefiles

4. Please see a copy of the shape files enclosed with this response. Please let me know if there are any issues accessing these.

Expected output

5. The output of the solar farm will be between 80 and 110MWp.

Interconnection details

6.
 - a. Aurecon are currently liaising with Transpower regarding the interconnection of the solar farm into their network. Initial discussions have identified a capacity limit of 80MWp for the connection. Energy Farms Limited (EFL) are investigating what is required to increase the capacity of the connection to 110MWp as part of their detailed design process (Marton substation upgrades and broader network impacts). The detailed design is currently being undertaken by Aurecon. They have a further meeting with Transpower the week of 13 March to discuss the interconnection. EFL are willing to limit the capacity of the farm to 80MWp if that is what can be provided at the Marton substation. The range specified in point 5 of this response provides for this.

The enclosed letter from Powerco also shows the working relationship between themselves, Aurecon and Energy Farms Limited. They are currently engaging in Memorandum of Understanding for the required work.

- b. The approvals required to facilitate the interconnection of the solar farm into the Transpower network have been factored into the timeframes detailed in the application. Obtaining the necessary approvals will therefore not impact those timeframes.

Ecological clarifications

7. Beca have now completed the final ecological report – a copy is enclosed. The following response is based on the final ecological report.
 - a. The Beca ecological report clarifies that the relevant area of the site does not meet the definition for a 'natural wetland' under the National Environment Standards for Fresh Water (NES-F). It does not include any commentary on whether the area meets the definition for a 'wetland' under the Rangitikei District Plan (RDP). However, this is not considered necessary as the area of concern has been entirely excluded from the project area. The below image demonstrates this, with the area in the north-western corner of the site excluded from the project area. The rules relating to 'wetlands' from the RDP are addressed below. The proposal does not require consent under any of these rules.



- b. There are a total of five rules in the RDP that relate to wetlands. The proposal is addressed in the context of those rules below.
 - B1.8 'Earthworks': Includes restrictions for earthworks were located within 10m of a wetland identified in schedule E of the Horizons Regional Council One Plan. There are no such wetlands on the site. This rule is not relevant.
 - B6.5 'Location of Effluent Storage Activities': Includes restrictions for the storage of effluent generated from primary production activities occurring

within 50m of a wetland in the Rural Living Zone. The site is located in the Rural Zone. This rule is not relevant.

- B7.5 'Location of Effluent Storage Activities': Includes restrictions for the storage of effluent generated from primary production activities occurring within 50m of a wetland in the Rural Zone. There will be no such activities occurring within 50m of the above area, so this rule is of no relevance regardless of whether the area is a 'wetland' under the RDP.
- B7.9 'Setbacks from Rivers, Lakes, Wetlands, and the Coast': Includes restrictions for buildings and structures within 15m of a wetland. The only structures proposed within 15m of the relevant area is a new culvert that will facilitate access over the adjoining stream. Rule B7.9 specifically excludes culverts. This rule is not relevant.
- B7.10 'Activities on the surface of any river or lake': Includes restrictions for activities occurring on, or structure erected, moored or placed on any surface water. No activities or structures are proposed on any surface water. This rule is not relevant.

Consultation with Horizon Regional Council

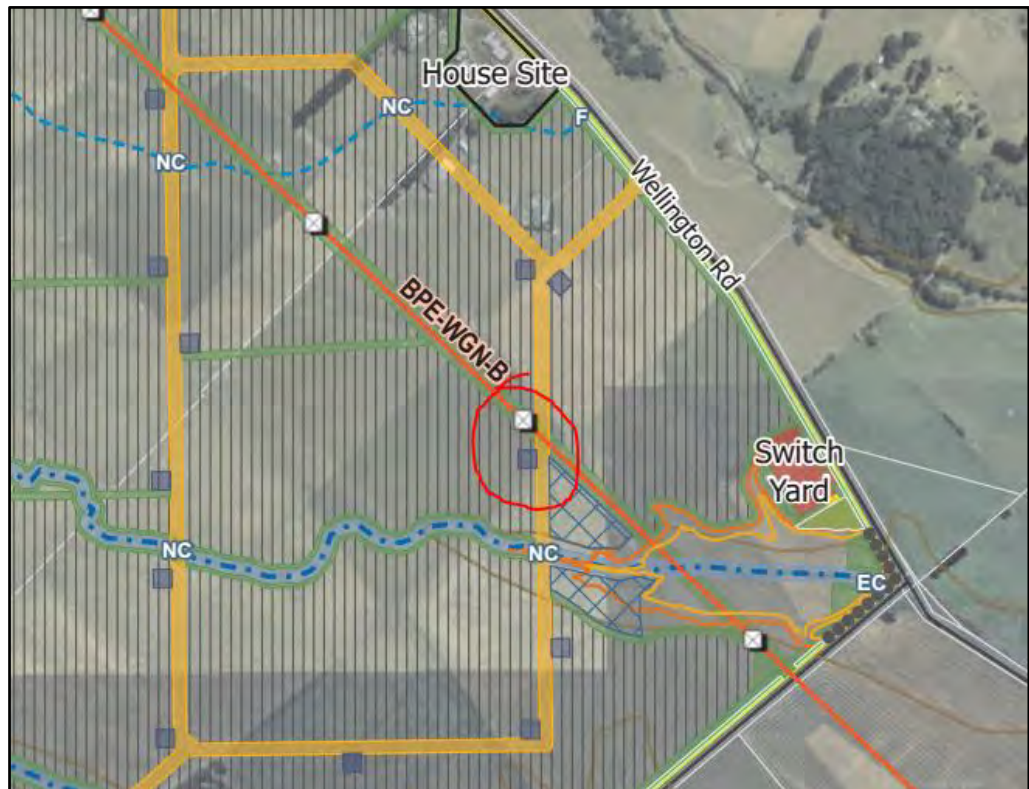
8. Some initial consultation has occurred with Horizon Regional Council in relation to the specifics of the Tutaenui Dam and the associated designation. To date, this has related to determining inundation levels in relation to the dam, and determining if the waterways across the site are identified as having 'Schedule B Value of Flood Control and Drainage'.
9. With regards to the Tutaenui Dam and the designation under the RDP, the solar farm has been specifically designed to avoid this area. Written consent has not been sought under section 176 of the Resource Management Act 1991 with respect to the designation.
10. As part of the application, we have applied for consent under Rule 17-15 of the Horizons Regional Plan. Upon reviewing previous correspondence, we have identified that Horizon Regional Council confirmed that the streams within the site have not been valued for Flood Control and Drainage. This means that Rule 17-15 of the Horizons Regional Council One Plan is of no relevance and is consent is not required under the rule. We request that the application is amended accordingly.

Reasons for consent – clarifications

Transpower electricity lines – RDP

11. There are four rules in the RDP that relate to earthworks/structures in proximity to National grid lines/structures. These are addressed below. The proposal does not require consent under any of these rules.
 - B1.13-1 requires that earthworks within 12 metres of the outer edge of a National grid structure comply with the New Zealand Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances (NZECP34:2001). Some earthworks may be required within this distance to form an internal access road. The relevant area is

identified below (white box with a cross is a structure, thick orange line is a road). Discussions with Beca have confirmed that any associated earthworks will be undertaken to comply with these requirements. The proposal is permitted under this rule.



- B1.13-2 specifies that no building or structure shall be located within 12 metres of the outer edge of a National grid support structure – fences must not be located within 5m. The Beca civil report submitted with the application confirms that the solar farm has been designed to comply with this setback requirement. The proposal is permitted under this rule.
- B1.13-3 requires that no building or structure is located within 12m of the centreline of a National grid transmission line. There is an exclusion for electricity infrastructure that connects to the National Grid. While none of the solar infrastructure is located in this setback, the security fences will pass under the lines. Under the RDP, a fence is defined as a building if higher than 2m. The height of the security fence is yet to be confirmed, but could be higher than 2m. The security fence is part of the solar farm, but is not specifically 'electricity infrastructure'. Resource consent is sought on a precautionary basis should the final fence height be higher than 2m. B1.1-4 of the RDP specifies that this is a restricted discretionary activity.
- B1.13-4 relates to sensitive activities. The proposal does not involve a 'sensitive activity' within the setback. This rule is not relevant.

Culverts – NES-F

12. There are a number of new culverts proposed as part of the solar farm, as shown on the Beca preliminary layout plan. The final design of some of these culverts is yet to be completed. However, Beca have advised that it is possible that they will not comply with the relatively onerous requirements under the NES-F. We would therefore like to apply for a precautionary consent under section 71 of the NES-F. Consent is required as a discretionary activity under this section of the legislation.

Conclusions

13. We trust that the above is sufficient to address the matters raised in the further information request.

Feel free to give me a call if you would like to discuss any of the above further.

Yours faithfully



Thomas Keogh
Senior Planner

Encl. Sale and purchase agreement, economic assessment, shape files, Powerco letter, final ecological report