

BRF-2937

Joanne Mooar
Senior Corporate Counsel
Transpower New Zealand Ltd
s 9(2)(a)

Dear Joanne Mooar

COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-Track Consenting) Act 2020 – comments sought on referral applications – Opanake Solar Farm Project and Marton Solar Farm Project

The Minister for the Environment (Minister) received applications from Energy Farms Limited to refer the Opanake Solar Farm Project and the Marton Solar Farm Project to an expert consenting panel (panel) for consideration under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (FTCA).

The purpose of the FTCA is to promote employment to support New Zealand's recovery from the economic and social impacts of COVID-19 and to support certainty of investment while continuing to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

The projects are described in Appendix A and the applications documents are in Attachments 1 and 2.

Transpower New Zealand may have an interest in the projects because the proposed solar farms will connect to the national electricity grid. Under delegated authority from the Minister and pursuant to section 21(3) of the FTCA, I invite Transpower New Zealand's written comments on the referral applications. A template is provided for this purpose in Attachment 3. 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 application.

Specific questions for both projects
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What additional approvals will the applicant(s) require from Transpower New Zealand Limited to connect to the national electricity grid?2. Will obtaining the above approvals likely impact on project delivery or timing as outlined in the referral application(s)?

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 applications and the projects are referred to a panel, the applicant will be able to lodge applications with the Environmental Protection Authority for the approvals

needed under the Resource Management Act 1991. The applicant must provide a detailed assessment of environmental effects and cultural impact assessments as part of this process.

Please provide comments via return email within 10 working days to ensure that the Minister takes them into consideration when deciding whether or not to accept the referral application. Note that the Minister is not required to consider any comments provided after this time.

If you would like more information about the fast-track consenting process, or to discuss the application, 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 projects

Attachments:

1. Application to refer the Opunake Solar Farm Project to an expert consenting panel, including supporting information (Databox link in covering email)
2. Application to refer the Marton Solar Farm Project to an expert consenting panel, including supporting information (Databox link in covering email)
3. Response template for written comments

cc: Daniel Hamilton
Environmental Regulatory Team Leader
s 9(2)(a)

Appendix A - Proposed projects

Project	Applicant	Details
Opunake Solar Farm Project	Energy Farms Limited	<p>The project is to construct and operate a solar farm on an approximately 188-hectare site comprising 2 properties at 574 and 575 Kina Road, Opunake, Taranaki, and to connect to and supply electricity to the national grid via existing 33kV Powerco Limited (Powerco) transmission lines. The solar farm will have an approximate installed capacity of between 80-110 peak Megawatts.</p> <p>The solar farm will comprise approximately 152,000 solar panels occupying approximately 180 hectares, arrays and mounting structures, inverter cabinets, and associated infrastructure, 11 inverter stations, one substation and a battery storage facility, ancillary buildings, structures and infrastructure (including a storage building, roads, access and other infrastructure), underground electricity cables, including within the Kina Road road reserve and enhancement of wetlands and streams.</p> <p>The project will require land use consents under the South Taranaki District Plan (STDP), water and discharge permits under the Taranaki Regional Freshwater Plan (TRFP), and resource consents under the Resource Management (National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health) Regulations 2011 (NES-CS) and the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020 (NES-F).</p>
Marton Solar Fm Project	Energy Farms Limited	<p>The project is to construct and operate a solar farm on an approximately 194-hectare site at 1618 Wellington Road, Marton, and to connect to and supply electricity to the national grid via existing 110kV Transpower New Zealand Limited (Transpower) transmission lines. The solar farm will have an approximate installed capacity of 80-110 peak Megawatts.</p> <p>The solar farm will comprise approximately 230,000 solar panels, occupying approximately 154 hectares, arrays and mounting structures, inverter cabinets, underground cables and associated infrastructure, 16 inverter stations, one substation and one transformer , ancillary buildings, structures and infrastructure (including a storage building, roads, access, security fencing, CCTV poles and other infrastructure) and underground electricity cables.</p> <p>The project will require land use consent under the Rangitikei District Plan (RDP), land use consent and a water permit under the Horizons Regional One Plan (HROP), and resource consent under the NES-CS and NES-F. The project site is in the Rural zone under the RDP and will have overall discretionary activity status under the plans and regulation.</p>