

Hon David Parker BCom, LLB

Attorney-General

Minister for the Environment

Minister for Oceans and Fisheries

Minister of Revenue

Associate Minister of Finance



BRF-2937

Ministers of/for:

Arts, Culture, and Heritage; Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti; Housing; Infrastructure; Energy and Resources; Education; Transport; Agriculture; Land Information; Defence; Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations; Local Government; Conservation; and Climate Change;

Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Ministers

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

Energy Farms Limited has applied to refer the Opunake 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). This letter is sent to you pursuant to section 21(2) of the FTCA.

The purpose of the FTCA is to urgently 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 application documents are in Attachments 1 and 2.

I invite you to provide written comments on the referral applications. If I accept the applications and the projects are referred, the applicants will be able to lodge applications with the Environmental Protection Authority for the approvals needed under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) for the projects, and panels will be appointed to consider and decide them. The applicants must provide a more detailed environmental assessment and cultural impact assessments as part of their RMA applications. You will have an opportunity at that stage to provide comments to the panels.

Please provide your comments via return email within 10 working days if you wish me to take them into consideration when deciding whether or not to accept the referral application.

Yours sincerely



Hon David Parker
Minister for the Environment

Appendix:

A. Description of proposed projects

Attachment:

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)

Attachment A - Proposed project

Project	Applicant	Details
Opunake Solar Farm Project	Energy Farms Limited	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. 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. 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).
Marton Solar Farm Project	Energy Farms Limited	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. 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. 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.

