

BRF-2937

Don Elers
Gas & People General Manager
Powerco Limited
s 9(2)(a)

Dear Don Elers

COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-Track Consenting) Act 2020 – comments sought on referral application – Ogunake Solar Farm Project

The Minister for the Environment (Minister) has received an application from Energy Farms Limited to refer the Ogunake Solar Farm Project (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 project is described in Appendix A and the application documents are in Attachment 1.

Powerco Limited may have an interest in the project because the proposed solar farm will connect to an existing 33kV Powerco Limited transmission line. The applicant has not supplied information to confirm that Powerco Limited has approved the connection, nor details of necessary works, including timing, may impact on project delivery or timing. Under delegated authority from the Minister and pursuant to section 21(3) of the FTCA, I invite Powerco Limited's written comments on the referral application. A template is provided for this purpose in Attachment 2.

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.

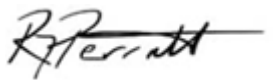
If the Minister accepts the application and the project are referred to a panel, the applicant will be able to lodge applications with the Environmental Protection Authority for the approvals needed under the Resource Management Act 1991. The applicant must provide a detailed assessment of environmental effects and cultural impact assessment(s) 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Perrett', is enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Rebecca Perrett
Acting Manager, Fast-track Consenting Team

Appendix:

- A. Details of proposed project

Attachments:

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

Appendix A - Proposed project

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>