

BRF-3063

Stephen Parry  
Chief Executive Officer  
Gore District Council  
s 9(2)(a)

Dear Stephen Parry

**COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 – comments sought on referral application – Southland Wind Farm Project**

The Minister for the Environment (Minister) has received an application from Contact Energy Limited to refer the Southland Wind Farm Project (project) to an expert consenting panel (panel) for consideration under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (FTCA).

The project is described in Appendix A and the application documents are in Attachment 1.

Under delegated authority from the Minister and pursuant to section 21(2) of the FTCA, I invite Gore District Council to provide written comments on the referral application. A template is provided for this purpose in Attachment 2. 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.

<b>Specific questions on the application</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Are there any reasons that you consider it more appropriate for the project, or part of the project, to proceed through existing Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) consenting processes rather than the processes in the FTCA?</li><li>2. Does the applicant, or a company owned by the applicant, have any environmental regulatory compliance history in your district?</li></ol>

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.

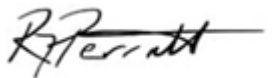
If the Minister accepts the application and the project is referred to a panel, Gore District Council will have the opportunity to nominate a local authority representative (who could be a councillor or independent hearings commissioner) to sit on the panel and determine the RMA approvals for the project. The applicant will provide a detailed assessment of environmental effects and cultural impact assessments at this stage and the council will have the opportunity

to provide further comments to the panel. The Ministry for the Environment has prepared guidance on local authority involvement with fast-track consenting projects which you can access on the Ministry for the Environment website.

Please provide comments via return email within 10 working days to ensure that the Minister takes them into consideration when making his decision. Note that the Minister is not required to consider any comments provided after this time.

If it is more efficient for you to discuss the application, please contact the Ministry for the Environment's Fast-track Consenting Team at [fasttrackconsenting@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:fasttrackconsenting@mfe.govt.nz) to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Perrett', 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 Southland Wind Farm Project to an expert consenting panel, including supporting information (Databox link)
2. Response template for written comments

cc: Email: [info@goredc.govt.nz](mailto:info@goredc.govt.nz)

## Appendix A – Details of proposed project

Project	Applicant	Details
Southland Wind Farm Project	Contact Energy Limited	<p>The project is to construct and operate a wind farm on approximately 5,500 hectares of land at 248 and 794 Venlaw Road, and 232 Campbell Road, Oware, Southland, and to connect to and supply electricity to the national grid. The wind farm will comprise up to 55 wind turbines with blade tip heights up to 200 metres high and will have an approximate installed capacity of 230–300 Megawatt peak. The project includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. construction of infrastructure and associated structures including internal roads, turbine foundations and hard stand areas, underground electrical cables, wind turbine transformers, two meteorological masts, a substation, a switching station and ancillary buildings</li> <li>b. construction of a 220 kV transmission line, approximately 15–17 kilometres long with up to 50 pylons, extending north along one of three possible routes from the proposed wind farm to the existing 220kV Transpower New Zealand Limited (Transpower) North Makarewa-Three Mile Hill A Circuit</li> <li>c. minor improvement works within the State Highway 1, 93 and 98, and Kaiwera Road and Kaiwera Downs Road road reserves to enable transportation of the wind turbines.</li> </ol> <p>The three route options for the 220kV transmission line cross various private and public land parcels within the Southland and Gore Districts (Southland Region) or Clutha District (Otago Region).</p> <p>The project will require land use consents under the Southland District Plan (SDP) and potentially under the Gore District Plan (GDP) or Clutha District Plan (CDP) depending on the confirmed transmission route. The project will also require water and discharge permits under the Environment Southland Regional Air Plan and Regional Water Plan, water and discharge permits under the Proposed Southland Water and Land Plan, and 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). The project will have overall discretionary activity status.</p> <p>The applicant may also lodge notices of requirement to designate a 400-metre transmission corridor for the new transmission line for consideration under the FTCA process if the project is referred.</p>