

BRF-3063

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

Dear Joanne Mooar

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 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.

Transpower New Zealand may have an interest in the project because the proposed wind farm will connect to the national 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 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.

Specific questions for the project

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What additional approvals will the applicant 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)? |
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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 the panel, the applicant will be able to lodge an application 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 project

Attachments:

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

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

Appendix A - 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"> 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 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 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. <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>