

BRF-2849

7 March 2023

Nicole Brewer
Chief Executive
Rotorua Airport Limited
Email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear Nicole Brewer

COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-Track Consenting) Act 2020 – comments sought on referral application – Taheke Geothermal Project

The Minister for the Environment (Minister) has received an application from ROOPU Whakarite Mahi Limited Partnership to refer the Taheke Geothermal Project (project) to an expert consenting panel (a 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.

Rotorua Airport Limited may have an interest in the project because the project site is located in the Rotorua Airport Clearance to Obstacle Limitation Surface and the applicant will therefore require approval from Rotorua Airport Limited as a requiring authority. Under delegated authority from the Minister and pursuant to section 21(3) of the FTCA, I invite your 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 'MB', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Madeleine Berry
Acting Manager, Fast-track Consenting Team

Appendix:

- A. Details of proposed project

Attachments:

1. Application to refer the Taheke Geothermal 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
Taheke Geothermal Project	ROOPU Whakarite Mahi Limited Partnership	<p>The project is to construct, operate and maintain a geothermal power station with an output of approximately 25 to 40 Megawatts net (18 kilometres north-east of Rotorua and 2 kilometres north-east of Okere Village). The project involves the take and reinjection/injection of approximately 10,000 tonnes of geothermal fluid per day from the Taheke geothermal field and will include installation of approximately ten production wells, construction of pipelines, underground and overhead transmission lines for supplying electricity to the national grid, and other ancillary infrastructure and structures.</p> <p>The project includes two options for the design of the geothermal power station, either a conventional geothermal steam turbine or an organic Rankine cycle plant. The project seeks to enable either option, with the final option being selected through detailed design.</p>