

Hon David Parker BCom, LLB

Attorney-General

Minister for the Environment

Minister for Oceans and Fisheries

Minister of Revenue

Associate Minister of Finance



2021-BRF-820

8 November 2021

Ministers of/for:

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

Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Ministers

COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 – comments sought on referral application – Tauhei Solar Farm

I have received an application to refer a project to an expert consenting panel (a 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 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 a copy of the application is electronically attached.

I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application. If I accept the application and the project is referred to a panel, the applicant will be able to apply via the Environmental Protection Authority for the approvals needed under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). A more detailed environmental assessment and cultural impact assessment will be required as part of this process. You will have an opportunity at that stage to provide comments to the panel established to consider and decide these RMA approvals.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Parker', is positioned above the typed name.

Hon David Parker
Minister for the Environment

Released under the provision of
the Official Information Act 1982

Appendix A - Proposed project

Project	Applicant	Details
Tauhei Solar Farm	Harmony Energy NZ Limited	<p>The project is to construct, install and operate a solar farm with capacity to generate approximately 185 Megawatt peak(MWp) electricity for supply to the national electricity grid.</p> <p>The project site is located on 262.5 hectares of private land, which extends from Mikkelson Road to Stanley Road South, and on parts of the Mikkelson Road and O'Donoghue Road reserves, in Te Aroha West, Waikato.</p> <p>The solar farm comprises:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. solar panels, arrays, mounting structures and poles covering approximately 182 hectares of the Project site b. two sub-stations c. a power station d. underground electricity cables e. ancillary buildings, structures and infrastructure <p>The project will involve activities such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. clearing vegetation b. carrying out earthworks (including disturbing potentially contaminated soils) c. taking, using and diverting groundwater d. discharging groundwater, stormwater run-off and contaminants to land and water e. constructing buildings and structures for renewable energy generation f. installing underground electricity cables and ancillary infrastructure g. constructing and/or upgrading roads, culverts, vehicle access and parking areas h. restoring wetland and riparian areas including constructing wetland utility structures i. planting for biodiversity corridors and boundary screening j. operating a solar farm k. hosting educational visits l. any other activities that are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. associated with activities described in paragraph a to k ii. within the project scope.