

2021-BRF-820

8 November 2021

Joanne Mooar
Senior 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 – Tauhei Solar Farm

The Minister for the Environment (the Minister) has received an application from Harmony Energy NZ Limited to refer the Tauhei Solar Farm 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 a link to the application documents is provided in the covering email.

You may have an interest in the project because the project proposes to connect to the national electricity grid operated by Transpower New Zealand Limited. Under delegated authority from the Minister and pursuant to section 21(3) of the FTCA, I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application. A template is attached for this purpose.

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, 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 your comments via return email within 10 working days to ensure that the Minister takes your comments 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



Stephanie Frame
Manager, Fast-track Consenting Team

Enclosures:

- A. Response template for written comments

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 185MWp (Megawatt peak) 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.</p> <p>The solar farm comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) solar panels, arrays, mounting structures and poles (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> <ul 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. associated with activities described in paragraph a to k ii. within the project scope.