

Comments on applications for referral under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020

This form is for local authorities to provide comments to the Minister for the Environment on an application to refer a project to an expert consenting panel under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020.

Local authority providing comment	Matamata-Piako District Council
Contact person (if follow-up is required)	Ally van Kuijk
	District Planner
	s 9(2)(a)

Comment form

Please use the table below to comment on the application.

Project name	Tauhei Solar Farm
General comment – potential benefits	Matamata-Piako District Council in general, supports renewable energy projects provided that the effects can be mitigated. In this particular application we can see the positive effects of this application as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increase in energy supply via renewable energy source; - potentially ecological enhancement and biodiversity corridors
General comment – significant issues	The significant issues that will need to be avoided, remedied or mitigated are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effects on high quality soils - Effects on the rural character; - Effects on the settlement of Te Aroha West - Ecological effects
Is Fast-track appropriate?	Matamata-Piako District Council are conscious that there is a fine balance between critical infrastructure and localised effects. As a result, this application may be a suitable application for the fast track process. Regardless of the process MPDC encourage localised input and comments.
Environmental compliance history	We can not comment as we have had no dealings with this company.
Reports and assessments normally required	The following are the reports and assessments that would generally be required for such an application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated Transport Assessment - Landscape and Visual Assessment – including but not limited to effects on rural character and effect in regards to the small settlement of Te Aroha West - Acoustic Assessments

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ecological Assessment - Stormwater Assessment - Glare and Light Assessment - Site suitability assessment which includes things such as geotechnical, hazards, liquefactions etc - Assessment on the effects on the good quality soils - More information would need to be supplied about the “educational” visit and cables within the road reserve
Iwi and iwi authorities	<p>In regards to Iwi, Council rely on the Te Kāhui Māngai website which identifies the follow Iwi who have interests in this location:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ngāti Hako - Ngāti Hauā - Ngāti Maru - Ngāti Rāhiri Tumutumu - Ngāti Tamaterā - Ngāti Tara Tokanui - Ngāti Whanaunga
Relationship agreements under the RMA	<p>MPDC has a subcommittee of Council, the Te Mana Whenua Forum however in regards to RMA application we have no formal Iwi relationship agreements currently in place such as JMAs or Mana whakahono o rohē</p>
Insert responses to other specific requests in the Minister’s letter (if applicable)	<p>In additional to the above, the Minister’s letter request comments in regards on cables within the road reserve.</p> <p>MPDC makes the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The application mentions that there will need to be underground cables located in the Mikkelsen Road reserve and across O’Donoghue Road. Prior to providing specific comments in regards to this, more detail will need to be provided (location, size, depth, line of influence etc) so that this can be assessed against the existing infrastructure within the road reserve. It is noted that there is at least one drain that the cable would need to cross within the road reserve as well as current stock crossing and stock grazing licences that maybe affected.
Other considerations	<p>Should this application be accepted through the Fast Track process, MPDC staff believe that comments should be sought from as a minimum the adjacent properties and properties identified in the above assessments.</p>

Note: All comments, including your name and contact details, will be made available to the public and the applicant either in response to an Official Information Act request or as part of the Ministry’s proactive release of information. Please advise if you object to the release of any information contained in your comments, including your name and contact details. You have the right to request access to or to correct any personal information you supply to the Ministry.

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This form is for persons requested by the Minister for the Environment to provide comments on an application to refer a project to an expert consenting panel under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020.

Organisation providing comment	Transpower New Zealand Limited
Contact person (if follow-up is required)	Jo Mooar
	Senior Corporate Counsel
	s 9(2)(a) [REDACTED]

Comment form

Please use the table below to comment on the application.

Project name	Tauhei Solar Farm (Project)
General comment	<p>Transpower has been identified as an “other person” for the purpose of section 21(3) of the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-Track Consenting) Act 2020 (Act). Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments about the Project, and its potential impact on National Grid assets.</p> <p>Transpower supports the application as it “contribut[es] to New Zealand’s efforts to mitigate climate change and transition more quickly to a low emissions economy (in terms of reducing New Zealand’s net emissions of greenhouse gases)” (section 19(d)(vii) of the Act).</p> <p>Transpower is not aware of any reason for the application to be declined. However, some potential impacts on the Grid will need to be managed in order to connect to the Grid. We expand on these issues below.</p> <p>The applicant proposes that the Project connect to the Grid at the Waihou Substation. This substation is designated under the RMA. Any connection to the Grid will require Transpower to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • install 4 panels (33kV feeder panels) to be installed inside an existing building. • Investigate and install necessary protection equipment at Waihou Substation (and potentially other substations) in order to prevent transformer overloading. • Investigate and install any voltage management equipment. <p>Transpower has had preliminary discussions with the application about connecting to the Grid. We have provided a timeline for any contracting, investigations into necessary protection and voltage stability works, and delivery of any works, in order to meet the Project timeline.</p>

	<p>Provided appropriate management occurs, including time to carry out necessary investigations, the Project would not be inconsistent with Policy 10 (in particular) of the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission (section 23(5)(c) of the Act).</p> <p>We do not consider these outstanding issues are a reason to decline the application for the Project to be referred to an expert panel.</p>
Other considerations	See above.
Will Transpower New Zealand Limited need to undertake any works to connect the proposed solar farm to the national electricity grid that require resource consents, modification to a designation or an outline plan or any other regulatory approval?	<p>We expect that the works to connect the solar farm to the Grid, including any necessary protection works, can be carried out within existing designations.</p> <p>We anticipate that the works will be installed within existing buildings on site, and will not require outline plan approval.</p> <p>Given the size of the solar farm, and preliminary work undertaken, we also anticipate that any necessary voltage management works can occur within the existing Substation.</p>
Will approval/s for these works be sought through a separate approval process or will they form part of the project scope for the Tauhei Solar Farm project?	N/A
If works undertaken by Transpower are required to use a separate approval process/es, how long is the approval process/es anticipated to take?	N/A

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Local authority providing comment	Waikato Regional Council
Contact person (if follow-up is required)	Amy Robinson
	Regional Consents Manager
	s 9(2)(a)

Comment form

Please use the table below to comment on the application.

Project name	Tauhei solar farm
General comment – potential benefits	Waikato Regional Council is supportive of the concept of renewable energy sources in principle to contribute to NZ's zero carbon target.
General comment – significant issues	WRC does not see any significant issues with this proposal. We recommend checking with Matamata Piako District Council to see whether the site is listed on the HAIL register.
Is Fast-track appropriate?	Yes.
Environmental compliance history	No
Reports and assessments normally required	Assessment of ecological effects; Sediment and erosion control plan
Iwi and iwi authorities	Hauraki Maori Trust Board
Relationship agreements under the RMA	No
Insert responses to other specific requests in the Minister's letter (if applicable)	<p>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?</p> <p>No (see answer to 4 below)</p> <p>2. What reports and assessments would normally be required by the council for a project of this nature in this area?</p> <p>If consent were required under the Waikato Regional Plan we would require an assessment of effects on ecology and a sediment and erosion control plan.</p> <p>3. Does the applicant, or a company owned by the applicant, have any environmental regulatory compliance history in your region?</p> <p>No</p>

	<p>4. Does the project contain any prohibited activities under the Waikato Regional Plan or the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020? In particular, are any activities regarding works affecting wetlands prohibited?</p> <p>No, the activity is permitted under rule 5.1.4.11 of the operative Waikato Regional Plan. The NESF does not apply to this application.</p>
<p>Other considerations</p>	<p>Check the HAIL register</p>

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