



BRF-921

14 December 2021

Harmony Energy NZ Limited
Christina Walker
Senior Planning and Policy Consultant
4Sight Consulting Limited
s 9(2)(a)

Dear Christina Walker

COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-Track Consenting) Act 2020 – Notice of Decisions (Section 25) – Tauhei Solar Farm

Thank you for Harmony Energy New Zealand Limited's application under section 20 of the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (FTCA) seeking referral of the Tauhei Solar Farm project to an expert consenting panel (a panel) for consideration under the FTCA.

The project is to construct and operate a solar farm to supply electricity to the national electricity grid and to install associated underground cabling from the solar farm to the boundary of the Waihou substation. The project site is on 262.5 hectares of privately-owned land and parts of the Mikkelson Road and O'Donoghue Road reserves, in Te Aroha West, Waikato.

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 the certainty of ongoing investment across New Zealand, while continuing to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

I can only refer the project to a panel for consideration under the FTCA if it meets the referral criteria in section 18 of the FTCA, which includes me being satisfied the project will help achieve the FTCA's purpose.

I have decided the project meets the referral criteria in section 18 of the FTCA and I consider it will help to achieve the FTCA's purpose as it has the potential to:

1. generate approximately 568 direct full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs in engineering, design and construction over a two-year period and approximately 7 direct FTE jobs on an on-going basis
2. provide infrastructure that will contribute to improving economic and employment outcomes

3. assist New Zealand's efforts to mitigate climate change and transition more quickly to a low greenhouse gas emissions economy by increasing New Zealand's total amount of renewable energy generation
4. progress faster than would otherwise be the case under standard Resource Management Act 1991 processes, provided that the applicant lodges their applications for resource consent in a timely manner following Project referral.

Any actual and potential effects arising from the project, together with any measures to avoid, remedy, mitigate, offset or compensate for adverse effects, could be tested by a panel against Part 2 of the Resource Management Act 1991 and the purpose of the FTCA (section 4 and clause 31 Schedule 6).

Accordingly, I have decided to accept your application for referral under section 24(2) of the FTCA and refer all of the project to a panel.

Information required to be submitted with your resource consent applications

In accordance with section 24(2)(d) of the FTCA, I have also decided that you must provide the information listed in Appendix A of this letter with any resource consent application for the project lodged with the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) under clause 2 Schedule 6.

I draw your attention to clause 14 Schedule 6 of the FTCA that details that the above information must be provided in sufficient detail to correspond to the scale and significance of effects. You should therefore provide what you believe is a reasonable level of information, and if a panel requires further information, they can seek it from you under clause 25 Schedule 6 of the FTCA.

This information will inform a panel's assessment of the proposal's effects and whether to invite comment from persons or groups in addition to those specified in clause 17 Schedule 6 of the FTCA. This does not preclude a panel from requiring you to provide any additional information on any application lodged with the EPA under the FTCA.

Persons or groups a panel must invite comments from

In accordance with section 24(2)(e) of the FTCA, I have also decided that a panel must invite comments on any resource consent application for the project lodged with the EPA from the persons and groups, additional to those specified in clause 17 Schedule 6 of the FTCA, who are listed in Appendix A of this letter.

This will allow those parties the opportunity to have input into the consideration of the application and enable a panel to better understand the potential effects of the proposal (for instance on landscape, glint and glare).

These directions do not preclude a panel from inviting any other parties to comment on any application lodged with the EPA under the FTCA.

I will progress an Order in Council through the Executive Council for the project. The wording of the referral order may vary slightly from the statements and directions included in this letter, due to legal drafting requirements.

Once this Order is made you will be able to lodge your applications for resource consent with the EPA for a decision by a panel. The decision to approve or decline the resource

consents/designation is a matter for the panel appointed by the Panel Convener Judge L J Newhook. You should not take my decision to refer the project as an indication or direction that the determination of those approvals will be successful. Additionally, my decision does not in any way endorse any related planning decisions that may affect the project.

Please do not publicly release my decision or this notice until the Order in Council for this project has been approved by Cabinet and notified in the New Zealand Gazette.

The FTCA requires that:

1. I provide a copy of my decisions to the persons, entities and groups specified in section 25(1) and (2) of the FTCA
2. My decisions, the reasons for them, and the Section 17 Report will be published on the Ministry for the Environment's website in accordance with section 25(3) of the FTCA.

In addition, I have also decided to provide a copy of this decision to the parties listed in Appendix A.

Please contact the Fast-track Consenting Team at the Ministry for the Environment (fasttrackconsenting@mfe.govt.nz) if you have any questions or wish to discuss this decision.

Yours sincerely



Hon David Parker
Minister for the Environment

cc Relevant Ministers of/for portfolios specified in section 21(6)(a)–(m) FTCA:

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

Additional relevant Minister:

Energy and Resources

Local authority/ies:

Matamata-Piako District Council
Waikato Regional Council

Other parties:

Transpower New Zealand

Relevant iwi authorities:

Representatives of Ngāti Hako
Representatives of Ngāti Hauā
Representatives of Ngāti Maru
Representatives of Ngāti Rāhiri Tumutumu
Representatives of Ngāti Tamaterā
Representatives of Ngāti Tara Tokanui
Representatives of Ngāti Whanaunga

Relevant Treaty settlement entities:

Hako Tūpuna Trust
Ngaati Whanaunga Ruunanga Trust
Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust
Ngāti Maru Rūnanga Trust
Ngāti Tamaterā Treaty Settlement Trust
Ngāti Tara Tokanui Trust
Ngāti Tumutumu Settlement Trust
Te Puāwaitanga o Ngāti Hinerangi Trust

Environmental Protection Authority

The Panel Convener

Released under the provision of
the Official Information Act 1982

Appendix A – Requirements specific to applications lodged by Harmony Energy NZ Limited for Tauhei Solar Farm

Information required to be submitted with your application

In accordance with section 24(2)(d) of the FTCA, I have also decided that you must provide the following information with any application:

- an integrated transport assessment that:
 1. identifies and addresses the effects of additional traffic on the road network during construction including on road safety and maintenance
 2. identifies how works required to repair construction damage to roads will be funded
- a solar photovoltaic glint and glare assessment, including modelling the location and nature of glint and glare effects on road users and sensitive receptors including dwellings, and appropriate mitigation measures
- an assessment of the effects of the project on local ecology and biodiversity, including on aquatic fauna
- a landscape, natural character and visual effects assessment of the Project including effects on rural landscape and the Te Aroha West settlement
- an acoustic assessment that identifies:
 1. the effect of noise from the solar farm on the amenity of nearby dwellings
 2. any measures to mitigate noise effects
- information on any discussions held, or any agreements made, between the applicant and Matamata-Piako District Council or Transpower about the following matters:
 1. occupation of the road reserve for underground infrastructure
 2. connecting to the national electricity grid.

Persons or groups a panel must invite comments from

In accordance with section 24(2)(e) of the FTCA, I have also decided that a panel must invite comments on any consent application for the project from the following additional persons or groups:

- the Minister for Energy and Resources
- Transpower New Zealand Limited.