



BRF-1071

26 January 2022

Heather Shotter
Chief Executive
Palmerston North City Council
s 9(2)(a)

Dear Heather Shotter

COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 – comments sought on referral application – Te Rere Hau Wind Farm Repowering project

The Minister for the Environment (the Minister) has received an application from NZ Windfarms Limited to refer the Te Rere Hau Wind Farm Repowering project to an expert consenting panel (a panel) for consideration under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (FTCA).

The project is described in Attachment A and a copy of the application documents is electronically attached.

Under delegated authority from the Minister and pursuant to section 21(2) of the FTCA, I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application. A template is attached for this purpose. Comment is sought on the specific matters outlined in the table below, and on any other matter you consider relevant to the Minister's decision on whether or not to accept the application.

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.

Specific questions on the application
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?
2. What reports and assessments would normally be required by the Council for a project of this nature in this area?
3. Does the applicant, or a company owned by the applicant, have any environmental regulatory compliance history in your city?

If the Minister accepts the application and the project is referred to a panel, the Council will have the opportunity to nominate a local authority representative (who could be a councillor or independent hearings commissioner) to sit on the panel and determine the RMA approvals for the project. The applicant will provide a detailed assessment of environmental effects and cultural impact assessments at this stage and the Council will have the opportunity to provide further comments to the panel. The Ministry for the Environment has prepared guidance on local authority involvement with fast-track consenting projects which you can access on the Ministry for the Environment website.

Please provide your comments via return email within 10 working days to ensure that the Minister takes your comments into consideration when making his decision. Note that the Minister is not required to consider any comments provided after this time.

If it is more efficient for you 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

Attachments:

- A. Details of proposed project
- B. Application to refer the Te Rere Hau Wind Farm Repowering project to an expert consenting panel, including supporting information
- C. Response template for written comments

cc Simon Mori, Planning Services Manager
Palmerston North City Council – s 9(2)(a)

Craig Lunn, Senior Planner – Compliance & Resolutions
Palmerston North City Council – s 9(2)(a)

Attachment A – Details of proposed project

Project	Applicant	Details
Te Rere Hau Wind Farm Repowering	NZ Windfarms Limited	The project is to redesign and upgrade the existing Te Rere Hau wind farm to increase operational efficiency and output of renewable electricity supplied to the national grid. The project will expand the overall footprint of the existing windfarm, remove 97 existing two-blade turbines 47 metres high and install 30 new three-blade turbines which are 162 metres high. This represents a 70% (approximately) reduction in the total number of turbines and an increase of approximately 245% in turbine height at the wind farm. The project scope includes options to uprate the existing underground transmission line connecting the wind farm to the national grid, or to install a new overhead transmission line. Activities will include vegetation removal, earthworks, removal of existing turbines, constructing new turbines including foundations and building pads, upgrading existing roads, constructing new roads and culverts, constructing new infrastructure including hardstand areas, underground electrical and communication cables, substation and grid connection equipment, and discharge of stormwater and contaminants.