



BRF-1141

21 March 2022

NZ Windfarms Limited

c/- s 9(2)(a)

Manager, Environment and Planning

Aurecon New Zealand Limited

s 9(2)(a)

Dear s 9(2)(a)

COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-Track Consenting) Act 2020 – Notice of Decisions (Section 25) – Te Rere Hau Wind Farm Repowering

Thank you for NZ Windfarms Limited's application under section 20 of the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (FTCA) seeking referral of the Te Rere Hau Wind Farm Repowering Project to an expert consenting panel (a panel) for consideration under the FTCA.

The Project is located on ridgelines of the Tararua Range north of the Aokautere-Pahiatua Road (Pahiatua Track), approximately 11 kilometres south-east of Palmerston North. It will expand the overall footprint of the existing Te Rere Hau wind farm, remove 97 existing 2-blade, 47-metre-high turbines and install 30 new 3-blade, 162-metre-high turbines and construct associated infrastructure.

The Project scope includes options to upgrade the existing underground transmission line connecting the wind farm to the national electricity grid, or to install a new overhead transmission line.

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 employment by providing approximately 197 direct full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs over a 3-year construction period, and 40 direct ongoing FTE jobs once construction is complete
2. provide infrastructure to improve economic, employment and environmental outcomes
3. contribute to 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 process.

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 following persons or groups additional to those specified in clause 17 Schedule 6 of the FTCA:

1. Minister of Energy and Resources
2. Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngāti Kauwhata
3. Transpower New Zealand Limited.

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.

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 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.

I have also decided to provide a copy of this decision to the following parties who are additional to those specified in the FTCA:

1. Minister of Energy and Resources
2. Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngāti Kauwhata
3. Transpower New Zealand Limited.

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) of the 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

Local authorities:

Palmerston North City Council
Tararua District Council
Horizons Regional Council

Other parties:

Transpower New Zealand Limited

Relevant iwi authorities:

Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated
Rangitāne o Tāmaki nui a Rua
Tanenuiarangi Manawatū Incorporated
Te Rūnanga o Raukawa Incorporated
Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Incorporated

Relevant Treaty settlement entities:

Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki Nui-a-Rua Settlement Trust
Rangitāne o Manawatū Settlement Trust
Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust
Toa Rangatira Trust

Environmental Protection Authority

The Panel Convener

Appendix A – Requirements specific to referral of the Te Rere Hau Wind Farm Repowering Project

Information required to be submitted with resource consent applications to a panel

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

- a landscape and visual assessment including visual depictions of the new turbines and any overhead pylons and transmission lines to be introduced from the west and east of the Tararua Range
- an assessment of options to mitigate the effects of the Project workforce on the local housing market
- a detailed ecological assessment including:
 - analysis of effects on birds, including:
 - cumulative effects
 - effects of turbine size
 - effects of turbine rotation speed
 - acoustic effects
 - a draft bird collision monitoring programme
 - a lizzard survey report
 - an assessment of effects on lizards
 - a draft lizard management plan
- an acoustic assessment that includes:
 - an assessment of construction and operational noise on the amenity of nearby dwellings in comparison to existing noise levels and proposed mitigation measures
 - methods for monitoring and reporting operational noise and vibration and reporting and responding to noise complaints
- an integrated transport assessment that:
 - identifies and addresses the effects of additional traffic on the road network during construction including on road safety and maintenance
 - identifies how works required to repair construction damage to roads will be funded
 - includes information about discussions held, and agreements made, by the authorised person and Palmerston North City Council.