

**Hon David Parker** BCom, LLB

Attorney-General

Minister for the Environment

Minister for Oceans and Fisheries

Minister of Revenue

Associate Minister of Finance



BRF-1923

Ministers of/for:

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

Parliament Buildings  
WELLINGTON

Dear Ministers

**COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 – comments sought on referral applications – Waiterimu Solar Farm Project and Waikanae North Project**

I have received two applications to refer projects to an expert consenting panel (panel) for consideration under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (FTCA). This letter is sent to you pursuant to section 21(2) of the FTCA.

The purpose of the FTCA is to urgently 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 projects are described in Appendix A, and the application documents are in Attachments 1 and 2.

I invite you to provide written comments on the referral applications. If I accept the applications and the projects are referred, the applicants will be able to lodge applications with the Environmental Protection Authority for the approvals needed under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) for the projects, and panels will be appointed to consider and decide them. The applicants must provide a more detailed environmental assessment and cultural impact assessment(s) as part of their RMA applications. You will have an opportunity at that stage to provide comments to the panel(s).

Please provide your comments via return email within 10 working days if you wish me to take them into consideration when deciding whether or not to accept the referral application.

Yours sincerely

Hon David Parker  
**Minister for the Environment**

Appendix:

A. Description of proposed projects

Attachments:

1. Application to refer Waiterimu Solar Farm Project to an expert consenting panel, including supporting information (Databox link in covering email)
2. Application to refer Waikanae North Project to an expert consenting panel, including supporting information (Databox link in covering email)

## Attachment A - Proposed project

Project	Applicants	Details
Waierimu Solar Farm Project	Waikato Solar Farms Limited and Transpower NZ Limited	<p>The project is to construct and operate a solar farm on a 380-hectare site at 304 and 345 Waierimu Road, Waierimu, Waikato, and to connect it to the national electricity grid. The solar farm will have an approximate output of 140-Megawatt peak. The solar panels will cover approximately 63 hectares and the solar farm will comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. approximately 225,000 solar panels up to approximately 3.5 metres high</li> <li>b. inverter cabinets, arrays, mounting structures, motors and poles to support the panels</li> <li>c. a substation and transmission line to connect to the national grid</li> <li>d. an energy storage facility</li> <li>e. underground electricity cables</li> <li>f. ancillary buildings, structures and infrastructure (including roads, fencing, security lighting and for connection to existing overhead electricity lines)</li> <li>g. landscaping including planting and enhancement of wetlands and streams.</li> </ul>
Waikanae North Project	Bulletin Trust Limited	<p>The Waikanae North Project is to subdivide an approximately 33-hectare site located at 99 and 103 State Highway 1, Waikanae and construct approximately 410 residential units and supporting infrastructure including roads, accessways, parking areas and three-waters services. The project includes the creation of open space areas, restoration and planting of natural wetlands on the site and stream reclamation.</p>