

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

Hon Megan Woods
Minister of Energy and Resources
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Hon Megan Woods

COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 – comments sought on referral application – Waiterimu Solar Farm Project

Waikato Solar Farms Limited and Transpower New Zealand Limited have applied to refer the Waiterimu Solar Farm Project (project)] 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 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 project is described in Appendix A and the application documents are in Attachment 1.

I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application. If I accept the application and the project is referred to a panel, the applicants will be able to apply via the Environmental Protection Authority for the approvals needed under the Resource Management Act 1991(RMA). A more detailed environmental assessment and cultural impact assessment(s) will be required as part of this process. You will have an opportunity to provide comments to the panel established to consider and decide these RMA approvals.

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

Yours sincerely

Hon David Parker
Minister for the Environment

Appendix:

A. Description of proposed project

Attachments:

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

Appendix 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"> a. approximately 225,000 solar panels up to approximately 3.5 metres high b. inverter cabinets, arrays, mounting structures, motors and poles to support the panels c. a substation and transmission line to connect to the national grid d. an energy storage facility e. underground electricity cables f. ancillary buildings, structures and infrastructure (including roads, fencing, security lighting and for connection to existing overhead electricity lines) <p>landscaping including planting and enhancement of wetlands and streams.</p>