

BRF-3038

Jim Stabback
Chief Executive
Auckland Council
s 9(2)(a)

Dear Jim Stabback

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

The Minister for the Environment (Minister) has received an application from LET Capital Number 3 Limited Partnership to refer the Waiuku Wind Farm Project (project) to an expert consenting panel (panel) for consideration under the COVID-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 (FTCA).

The project is described in Appendix A and the application documents are in Attachment 1.

Under delegated authority from the Minister and pursuant to section 21(2) of the FTCA, I invite Auckland Council to provide written comments on the referral application. A template is provided for this purpose in Attachment 2. 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.

Specific questions on the application
<ol style="list-style-type: none">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. Does the applicant, or a company owned by the applicant, have any environmental regulatory compliance history in your district?3. The project includes two alternative options for the proposed wind farm connection to the national grid, including works and infrastructure within the road reserve. What additional approvals will the applicant require for works and infrastructure within the road reserve, and will obtaining the approvals likely impact on project delivery or timing as outlined in the referral application(s)?

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.

If the Minister accepts the application and the project is referred to a panel, Auckland 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 comments via return email within 10 working days to ensure that the Minister takes them 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



Rebecca Perrett
Acting Manager, Fast-track Consenting Team

Appendix:

- A. Details of proposed project.

Attachments:

1. Application to refer the Waiuku Wind Farm Project to an expert consenting panel, including supporting information (Databox link)
2. Response template for written comments

cc: Ian Smallburn
General Manager Resource Consents
Auckland Council
s 9(2)(a)

Appendix A – Details of proposed project

Project	Applicant	Details
Waiuku Wind Farm Project	LET Capital Number 3 Limited Partnership	<p>The project is to construct and operate a wind farm on an approximately 560-hectare site, comprising multiple properties at 66 Huarau Way, 44 and 76 Robertson Road, 136, 191 and 260 Thomson Road, and 612 Forestry Road, Otatau, Waikato, and to connect to and supply electricity to the national grid. The wind farm will have an approximate installed capacity of 80 peak Megawatts and will comprise up to 18 wind turbines with blade tip heights up to 190 metres high. The project includes the construction of infrastructure and supporting structures including internal roads, turbine platforms, foundation and crane pads, underground electrical and fibre optic cables, two wind monitoring masts up to 100 metres high, a central collector station building and ancillary buildings.</p> <p>The project includes two options to connect to and supply electricity to the national grid, with the transmission lines extending north into the Auckland Region:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Option A involves the construction of a new 33kV transmission line extending from the proposed wind farm to an existing 33kV Counties Energy Limited (Counties Energy) transmission line south of Otatau. Upgrades would also be required to the existing 33kV transmission line along the route to the Waiuku substation and then on to the Glenbrook substation. b. Option B involves the construction of a new 33kV transmission line, with two route options, extending from the proposed wind farm to the Waiuku substation and either a new 33kV transmission line, or upgrading to the existing 33kV Counties Energy transmission line, between Waiuku and Glenbrook substations. <p>Both connection options involve works on private land and within road reserve.</p> <p>The project will require land use consents under the operative Waikato District Plan (OWDP) and the proposed Waikato District Plan (PWDP), water and discharge permits under the Waikato Regional Plan, and resource consents under the Resource Management (National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health) Regulations 2011 (NES-CS) and the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020 (NES-F). The applicant has not identified any resource consent requirements under the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP).</p>