

# Hon Chris Bishop

Minister of Housing  
Minister for Infrastructure  
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform  
Minister of Transport  
Leader of the House  
Associate Minister of Finance  
Associate Minister for Sport and Recreation



FTAA-2505-1097

Hon Raynor Asher  
Fast-track Expert Panel Chair  
substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz

Dear Hon Raynor Asher,

Thank you for the invitation to comment on Lodestone Energy Limited's Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA) substantive application, the Haldon Solar project - FTAA-2505-1097. I am responding in my capacity as Minister Responsible for RMA Reform and Infrastructure.

Infrastructure is important for growth and prosperity and renewable electricity generation is priority infrastructure. Our view is our planning system has not been enabling of growth, hence the establishment of the FTAA. I have attached my comments relating to the Haldon Solar project in Appendix 1.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my broad support for projects which deliver positive outcomes for New Zealand, including the Haldon Solar project. Please take this letter of support as a reflection of the Government's economic growth and infrastructure priorities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CBishop'.

Hon Chris Bishop  
**Minister Responsible for RMA Reform**  
**Minister for Infrastructure**

## **Appendix 1 – Comments on the Haldon Solar project – FTAA-2505-1097**

### ***National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011 - Amended December 2025 (NPS-REG)***

The Haldon Solar project is broadly consistent with the NPS-REG. The NPS-REG includes the objective to enable REG capacity and output to significantly increase, and to support achieving New Zealand's emissions targets. With a planned annual generation output of 370 GWh, the project represents a significant amount of additional renewable electricity generation (REG), providing enough electricity for 45,000 households.

The NPS-REG allows for REG development in all environments and locations, including areas that are of significance to Māori, and outstanding landscapes. However, decision makers must recognise and provide for Māori interests as well as the effects on outstanding landscapes. I note that the site is of significance to Māori, as well as being identified in the Mackenzie District Plan as an outstanding natural landscape. The expert panel will be best placed to assess these points.

### ***National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks 2008 - Amended December 2025 (NPS-EN)***

The Haldon Solar project will require connection to the existing electricity network, as well as establishing a new local electricity transmission network and substation.

The NPS-EN includes direction to provide and recognise electricity network's national significance, as well as secure the resilience for the wider network. The project is not considered contrary to the objectives and policies of the NPS-EN.

### ***Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities) Regulations 2009 (NES-ETA)***

The Haldon Solar project requires a discretionary activity consent under Regulation 39 of the NES-ETA for an upgrade of an existing National Grid Transmission Line. This is required to connect the project to the national grid.

The NES-ETA applies to existing National Grid transmission lines and does not apply to the construction of new transmission lines or to substations. However, the proposal includes establishing a new transmission line and tower to connect to an existing Benmore – Islington transmission line. This new line and structure will be an upgrade and an increase in capacity to the existing network.

This aspect of the proposal includes new transmission lines for the purpose of electricity transmission and is considered consistent with the NES-ETA.

### ***Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025***

In 2025 the Government amended the RMA (Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025). The amendments include relevant provisions for renewable energy projects.

The RMA now requires councils to issue natural resource permits for renewable energy projects with 35-year durations and extends their lapse date to 10 years after the commencement date. Lodestone Energy's request for their discharge permits to be issued for 35 years with a 10-year consent duration for construction activities is consistent with the Amendment Act and will provide certainty of renewable electricity generation from the Haldon Solar power scheme.