

Hon Shane Jones

Minister for Oceans and Fisheries
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Resources
Associate Minister of Finance
Associate Minister for Energy



4 February 2026

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – Kaimai Hydroelectric Power Scheme Re-Consenting application (FTAA-2502-1024)

Dear Chris

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this substantive application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA 2024).

The FTAA 2024 has been established to provide a regime that makes it easier and quicker for regionally and nationally significant infrastructure projects to gain the approvals needed for development, in support of this Government's economic growth objectives.

I have considered the application and its alignment with the priorities of my Regional Development portfolio. My comments are attached as Annex One.

Yours sincerely

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

Hon Shane Jones
Minister for Regional Development

Annex One – Regional Development comments

Project overview

1. Manawa Energy Limited, the applicant, is seeking the renewal of Kaimai Hydroelectric Power Scheme's (HEPS) resource consents for its continued run-of-the-river electricity generation operations in the Wairoa River Catchment, near Tauranga.
2. Kaimai HEPS has an installed generation capacity of 42 megawatts (MW) and an annual average output of 169 gigawatt hours, equivalent to powering approximately 24,600 households, around 32 per cent of Tauranga's electricity demand.
3. The economic assessment report provided by the applicant indicates that continuing to operate the Kaimai HEPS will:
 - a. maintain local employment – typically 150-200 people per year do some form of work at the Kaimai HEPS, although these are generally contractors who work for a few weeks during annual outages
 - b. generate approximately \$2.4 million in annual operating expenditure and \$2 million in annual capital expenditure which contributes to the construction sector.
4. Renewing the scheme's consents would also avoid an estimated \$205.5 million in infrastructure costs that would be required to replace the scheme with a similar electricity supply generation profile.

Regional Development comments

5. Based on the analysis provided, the continued operation of the Kaimai HEPS is expected to offer economic benefit to the Bay of Plenty region through ongoing employment, and through providing peak electricity demand requirements for Tauranga.
6. Comment on the significance of the Kaimai HEPS on the national energy system should be addressed through the Energy portfolio. Indicatively, however, officials advise that Kaimai HEPS' output, because it is run-of-the-river (which limits the capacity in comparison to dam hydro schemes), appears modest in comparison to other large hydro generation schemes across New Zealand. For example, the Clyde Dam has an installed capacity of 432 MW, compared with Kaimai HEPS' 42 MW installed capacity.