

FTAA-2507-1086

22 September 2026

Lisa Mead
Contact Energy Limited

email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear Lisa

Notice of Decisions on application for referral of the Mangahao Hydro-Electric Scheme Reconsenting project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

This notice of decisions is for an application received from Manawa Energy Limited for referral of the Mangahao Hydro-Electric Scheme Reconsenting project (project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) that has been accepted by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) under section 21 and referred under section 26.

The project is the reconsenting of the existing Mangahao Hydro-Electric Power Scheme to enable its continued operation and maintenance. The project is located in the northern part of the Tararua Ranges, approximately 28 kilometres south-west of Palmerston North and 15 kilometres north-east of Levin. It draws water from the Mangahao River and generates up to 39.9 megawatts (MW) of electricity, with an average annual output of 131 gigawatt-hours (GWh), sufficient to power approximately 20,000 homes. The project includes existing operation and maintenance activities occurring across multiple land parcels, including Crown land administered by the Department of Conservation (DOC).

The activities applied for include:

- the damming, taking, diversion and use of water;
- the discharge of water and sediment;
- the disturbance of riverbeds;
- the deposition of sediment;
- the maintenance of structures within waterbodies; and
- the erection and placement of structures within waterbodies (included on a precautionary basis).

The project will require the proposed approvals:

- resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)
- approval under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983, although the applicant states that further ecological investigations will determine whether a standard or complex freshwater fisheries approval is necessary.

The project can only be accepted if the Minister is satisfied the criteria in section 22 is met, which includes being satisfied the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits and referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes and is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process..

Decision on referral application

The Minister has decided to accept the referral application for the whole project and is satisfied it meets the criteria in section 22 (s 21(1)(c)) and to refer the project to the fast-track approvals process under section 26(2)(a).

Reasons for accepting referral application

The Minister is satisfied the project:

- a. is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits; and
- b. referring the project to the fast-track approvals process –
 - (i) would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes; and
 - (ii) is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

The Minister is satisfied the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits as it:

1. involves the continued operation and maintenance of the existing Mangahao Hydro-Electric Power Scheme
2. will deliver new regionally or nationally significant infrastructure or enable the continued functioning of existing regionally or nationally significant infrastructure (s22(2)(a)(ii)): because it would enable the continued functioning of existing regionally and nationally significant renewable electricity infrastructure that;
 - a. generates approximately 131 gigawatt-hours (GWh) annually, sufficient to power approximately 20,000 homes;
 - b. has a generation capacity of 39.9 megawatts (MW) and provides controllable renewable generation that supports peak demand and complements intermittent renewable generation; and
 - c. contributes to regional energy security and the reliability and resilience of electricity supply.
3. will deliver significant economic benefits (s22(2)(a)(ix)): by maintaining the economic benefits provided by the scheme, including avoiding an estimated \$190.6 million in replacement generation and firming infrastructure costs and approximately \$5.8 million annually in replacement fuel costs.

4. will support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions – s22(2)(a)(vii): by maintaining renewable electricity generation and avoiding greenhouse gas emissions associated with replacement thermal generation.
5. will support climate change adaptation, reduce risks arising from natural hazards, or support recovery from events caused by natural hazards – s22(2)(a)(viii): by maintaining electricity generation infrastructure that contributes to the continuity, reliability and resilience of electricity supply and is recognised as a lifeline utility under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002.

The Minister is satisfied there is no reason they must decline the project under section 21(3) of the Act.

Specified matters for accepted referral application

1. Manawa Energy Limited who lodged the referral application are specified as the person(s) authorised to lodge a substantive application for the project under section 27(2).
2. In relation to a substantive application for the project:
 - a. the deadline for lodging the application applies under section 27(3)(b)(i) is two years from the date of issue of this letter
 - b. the following information must be submitted with the application lodged for the project under section 27(3)(b)(ii):
 - (i) evidence of engagement undertaken by the applicant with relevant Māori groups and Treaty settlement entities, including any matters raised through that engagement and how those matters have been considered by the applicant, to be included in the cultural impacts assessment.
 - c. The persons or groups from whom a panel must invite comments from in addition to any specified in section 53 – s27(3)(b)(iii): Electra Limited and Transpower New Zealand Limited.

If you have any queries about this notice of decisions, please email referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Antonia Croft or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 225 537).

Yours sincerely



Max Gander-Cooper
Acting Manager – Fast-track Operations

cc: Written notice of decisions – s28(1):

the applicant – Manawa Energy Limited

anyone invited to comment – s17(1):

- relevant local authorities – Horizons Regional Council and Horowhenua District Council
- Minister for the Environment, Minister for Māori Development, Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti and relevant portfolio Ministers: Minister for Energy, Minister of Climate Change, and Minister of Conservation
- relevant administering agencies – Department of Conservation,
- Māori groups identified in the s18(2) list provided to the Minister –
 - Rangitāne o Manawatū Settlement Trust (PSGE)
 - Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust (PSGE)
 - Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa - Tāmaki nui-ā-Rua Settlement Trust (PSGE)
 - Muaūpoko Tribal Authority Inc
 - Te Rūnanga o Raukawa Incorporated Ngāti
 - Kahungunu ki Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua
 - Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Inc
 - Tānenuiārangi Manawatū Charitable Trust
 - Rangitāne o Tāmaki nui-ā-Rua
- any other persons – Electra Limited, Transpower New Zealand Limited, Minister for Regional Development, and Minister for Economic Growth.

cc: Written notice where the Minister accepts the application and refers the project – s28(2):

- the Panel Convener (including all the information received by the Minister – s28(4))
- the EPA (including all the information received by the Minister – s28(4))
- the relevant administering agencies – Department of Conservation