

BRF-6626

18 August 2025

Meridian Energy Limited
c/- Amy Callaghan
GHD Ltd

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear Amy

Notice of Decisions on application for referral of the Lake Pūkaki Hydro Storage and Dam Resilience project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

This notice of decisions is for an application received from Meridian Energy Limited for referral of the Lake Pūkaki Hydro Storage and Dam Resilience 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 described as seeking resource consents for water takes from Lake Pūkaki to occur over three consecutive winters from winter 2026 at levels lower than the currently authorised minimum normal operating level of 518mRL (meters Relative Level).

The project also seeks resource consents to install permanent rock armouring on Pūkaki Dam at the southern end of the lake. Rock armouring works can only be undertaken when lake levels are lower than the normal minimum operating level of 518mRL. The works will take approximately 10-12 weeks to complete and may occur in stages over multiple years as lake levels allow.

The project will require the proposed approvals:

1. Resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991
2. Wildlife permits under the Wildlife Act 1953 in case native lizard species require capture and relocation.

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.

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Fast-track referrals are administered on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure by the Ministry for the Environment | PO Box 10362 | Wellington 6143, New Zealand | NZBN: 9429041908853

Decision on referral application

The Minister has decided to accept the referral application for the whole project as he 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).

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 is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the Fast-track approvals.

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

- (a) would enable the continued functioning of existing nationally significant infrastructure
- (b) would lower wholesale electricity prices by approximately 7 per cent, which will lower costs to consumers by approximately \$518 million per annum or \$1.5 billion over the project's three-year lifespan
- (c) will enhance the security of electricity supply and contribute approximately \$1.6 million to regional gross domestic product and create employment of approximately 19.5 full-time equivalent jobs over the construction period
- (d) will reduce greenhouse gas emissions because the project increases the availability of hydroelectric power, thereby reducing reliance on coal generation, diesel power and thermal generation during energy shortage periods.

The Minister is satisfied that there is no reason he must decline the project under section 21(3) of the FTAA.

Specified matters for accepted referral application

- (a) Meridian Energy Limited who lodged the referral application are specified as the persons authorised to lodge a substantive application for the project under section 27(2).
- (b) In relation to a substantive application for the project:
 - a. A deadline for lodging the application applies under section 27(3)(b)(i), the application must be lodged by two years from the date of issue of this letter.

- (c) The following information must be submitted with the substantive application lodged for the project under section 27(3)(b)(ii):
- a. A summary of consultation with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, relevant papatipu rūnanga and their representatives since referral, outlining concerns raised regarding Ngāi Tahu settlement principles, statutory acknowledgements, and nohoanga entitlement, and explaining how this has informed the substantive application.
- (d) The persons or groups from whom a panel must invite comments from in addition to any specified in section 53 (under section 27(3)(b)(iii)):
- a. 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 Application Lead – Ben Bunting or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 225 537).

Yours sincerely



Ilana Miller

General Manager, Delivery and Operations

cc: Written notice section 28(1) for accept and decline projects:

The applicant – Meridian Energy Limited

any person invited to comment section 17(1):

- relevant local authorities: Mackenzie District Council and Canterbury Regional Council
- Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Energy, the Minister for Economic Growth, and the Minister for Regional Development.
- relevant administering agencies – Ministry for the Environment and Department of Conservation
- Māori groups identified in the list provided to the Minister – Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, Te Rūnanga o Waihao, Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited, and Aukaha
- any other person – the chief executives of Transpower New Zealand Limited, and Land Information New Zealand.

cc: Written notice where the Minister accepts the application and refers the project section 28(2):

- the Panel Convener - including all the related information received by the Minister
- the Environmental Protection Authority - including all the related information received by the Minister
- the relevant administering agencies: Ministry for the Environment and the Department of Conservation.