

Hon Shane Jones

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



11 June 2026

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – Foxton Solar Farm application (FTAA-2510-1121)

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 be 'Shane Jones'.

Hon Shane Jones
Minister for Regional Development

Annex One – Regional Development comments

Project overview

1. Genesis Energy Limited (Genesis), the applicant, is seeking Fast-track consent for the construction and operation of an approximately 220-megawatt solar facility on 436 hectares (ha) of a 488ha site currently used for dairy farming and stock grazing.
2. The project will also include provision for the construction of a 200 megawatt-hour battery energy storage system (BESS), as well as ancillary infrastructure such as internal access roads, perimeter security fencing and an operations and maintenance building.
3. An economic assessment provided by the applicant estimates that the project:
 - a. will result in \$312 million of construction expenditure, of which \$54.6 million (17.5 per cent) will occur in the Horowhenua District and \$78.0 million (25 per cent) will occur in the broader Manawatū-Whanganui region;
 - b. will create an average workforce of 103 full-time equivalent jobs over the 18-24 month construction period, including an estimated 62 resident within the Horowhenua District and an estimated 98 resident within the Manawatū-Whanganui Region;
 - c. once completed, will generate around three to five ongoing jobs over its expected operating life of at least 35 years.
4. The completed solar farm will generate enough power for the equivalent of 47,000 homes annually.

Regional Development comments

5. Based on the economic assessment provided by the applicant, I consider the economic impact of the project during its construction period may be regionally significant. The scale of the project's renewable generation capacity suggests that its ongoing economic impact is likely to be regionally and nationally significant, although the economic benefits of this generation capacity have not been quantified.
6. I note that the project site is currently used for dairy as well as sheep farming, and that once the project is constructed the site will only be used for sheep farming as part of the site's maintenance. Some loss of higher-value primary production should therefore also be considered alongside the potentially significant benefits of the project.
7. Comment on the impact of the project on New Zealand's energy system should come from the Minister for Energy.