



Expert Panel, Kaimai Hydroelectric Power Scheme Re-Consenting (FTAA-2502-1024)

**By email:** [Substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz](mailto:Substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Manawa Energy Limited's application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) for approvals to continue operation of the Kaimai Hydroelectric Power Scheme.

I am providing these comments in my capacity as Minister for Energy, under section 53(2)(j) of the Act.

I have considered how this project would support the purpose of the Act, i.e. *to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.*

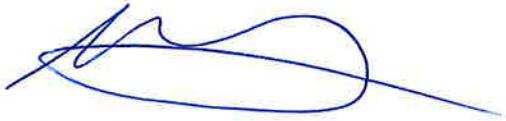
I consider this proposed project has significant regional benefits as follows:

- The hydro scheme is an existing generation facility with daily storage and has a maximum capacity of 42 MW, generating approximately 169 GWh annually – which is enough energy to power around 24,600 homes.
- Maintaining the capacity of existing hydro generation – such as the Kaimai scheme – is critical to the ongoing operation of our electricity sector. Compared with more variable generation such as wind and solar, hydro delivers more predictable output in suitable locations, which smooths overall energy supply and supports investment in other intermittent generation projects.
- Renewable electricity generation supports other outcomes including:
  - Contribution to climate change targets, as renewable electricity generation can displace use of fossil fuels in both the electricity and wider energy systems (e.g., reducing the use of thermal fuels for electricity generation, and supporting increased demand for electricity for sectors such as transport).
  - Contribution to security of energy supply, through geographic diversity of energy generation, and reducing the energy system's exposure to weather or other localised risks.
  - Downward pressure on wholesale electricity prices, which supports more affordable energy for New Zealand firms and households. Affordable energy also has wider flow-on benefits to the wider

economy – e.g., by reducing input costs for commercial and industrial energy users.

I support the Panel's continued consideration of this application.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hon Simon Watts  
**Minister for Energy**