

Hon Simeon Brown

Minister of Health
Minister for Energy
Minister for State Owned Enterprises



To: Expert Panel, Foxton Solar Farm (FTA-2501-1121)

By email: substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Genesis Energy Limited's application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) for approvals for the Foxton Solar Farm.

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 the proposed project has significant regional and national benefits as follows:

- Once completed, the project will have a maximum generation capacity of 220 megawatts (MW), generating enough energy to power 43,000 homes.
- This is a very large solar farm by New Zealand standards, with over 150 solar panels on a 436-hectare site. The application also includes provision for a 100MW / 200 MWh battery energy storage system which increases the energy system benefits of the project - enabling energy generated during peak sunlight hours to be discharged at times of high demand.
- Renewable electricity generation supports other outcomes including:
 - contribution to **security of energy supply** through diversity of energy generation
 - 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), and
 - 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. by reducing the use of thermal fuels for electricity generation and supporting increased demand for electricity for sectors such as transport).

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sim B' followed by a horizontal line.

Hon Simeon Brown
Minister for Energy