

Hon Chris Bishop

Minister of Housing
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Minister of Transport
Leader of the House
Associate Minister of Finance
Associate Minister for Sport and Recreation



FTAA-2502-1024

Gerald Lanning
Fast-track Expert Panel Chair
substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz

Dear Gerald,

Thank you for the invitation to comment on Manawa Energy Limited's Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA) substantive application, the Kaimai Hydroelectric Power Scheme - FTAA-2502-1024. I am responding in my capacity as Minister Responsible for RMA Reform and Minister for Infrastructure

Infrastructure is important for growth and prosperity and renewable electricity generation is priority infrastructure. Our view is our planning system has not been enabling of growth, hence the establishment of the FTAA. I have my attached my comments relating to the Kaimai Hydroelectric Scheme in Appendix 1.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my broad support for projects which deliver positive outcomes for New Zealand, including the Kaimai Hydroelectric Scheme. Please take this letter of support as a reflection of the Government's economic growth and infrastructure priorities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Bishop'.

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Minister for Infrastructure

Appendix 1

Comments on the Kaimai Hydroelectric Power Scheme – FTAA-2502-1024

National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011 - Amended December 2025 (NPS-REG)

The Kaimai Power Scheme FTAA application is consistent with the objective and policies of the NPS-REG. The FTAA application will ensure the Kaimai Power Scheme can continue generating renewable electricity and it supports the Government's target to double renewable electricity generation by 2050. I also expect you will get other technical information on site-specific matters to support your decision on this project.

Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025

In 2025 the Government amended the RMA (the Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Act 2025). The amendments include relevant provisions for renewable energy projects.

The RMA now requires councils to issue natural resource permits for renewable energy projects with 35-year durations. Manawa Energy's request for their permits to be issued for 35 years is consistent with the amended RMA and will provide long-term certainty of renewable electricity generation from the Kaimai Power Scheme.

National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 & National Environmental Standards for Freshwater 2020

Reconsenting of the Kaimai Power Scheme does not require any asset upgrades or changes, and Manawa are seeking no changes to the operational activities specified under the existing consents, with the exception of introducing residual flows below the Omanawa River and Mangapapa River intakes, and below McLaren Falls Dam.

The Kaimai Power Scheme is 'specified infrastructure' under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM).

The applicant's Aquatic Ecology and Water Quality Assessment provide detailed assessment of the waterways impacted, and in general find the NPS-FM National Objectives Framework thresholds are not exceeded and impacts to ecology are mostly low.

Fish passage is noted as restricted in some areas (eg, Mangapapa weir, McLaren Dam). The introduction of residual flows is identified as a mitigating measure to allow for fish passage. The Kaimai Power Scheme also proposes to implement a Native Fish Management Plan (in conjunction with mana whenua), including the provision of suitable fish passage where appropriate.