

Your Comment on the Foxton Solar Farm application

Please include all the contact details listed below with your comments and indicate whether you can receive further communications from us by email to substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz.

1. Contact Details			
Please ensure that you have authority to comment on the application on behalf of those named on this form.			
Organisation name (if relevant)	[REDACTED]		
First name	LINDA		
Last name	SHAILER		
Postal address	[REDACTED]		
Home phone / Mobile phone	[REDACTED]		
Email (a valid email address enables us to communicate efficiently with you)	[REDACTED]		

2. We will email you draft conditions of consent for your comment			
☒	I can receive emails and my email address is correct	☐	I cannot receive emails and my postal address is correct

Please provide your comments below, include additional pages as needed.

My Submission Regarding Proposed Foxton Solar Development

I do not believe Genesis is taking a sufficiently long-term view of this project. New Zealand has other environmentally responsible energy-generation options that would not require the use of productive agricultural land and would have less environmental impact.

Referring to this development as a "solar farm" is a play on words. It does not change the fact that it is an industrial activity. In my view, placing a large-scale industrial development on flat, fertile, food-producing land is neither sensible nor sustainable.

Personal Impacts

My family has spent considerable time and money preparing our section (that overlooks the proposed solar site) for our future retirement home. We have supplied power and water in readiness, and planted the property, as part of making plans to build there in the coming years.

As a result of this proposal, we no longer wish to proceed with those plans due to concerns about safety, noise, visual impacts, and the overall effect on our wellbeing and enjoyment of the property.

We are also concerned that the value and marketability of the section and farm will be significantly reduced.

I asked the applicants representatives if they would be happy to live on our building site? They all said or indicated they would not.

This situation is causing considerable stress at a stage of life when we have worked hard to prepare and expected certainty and security. I believe it is reasonable to seek compensation for the impacts of the development.

Trust and Consultation Concerns

During consultation with the applicant representation, we were advised of certain matters that appear inconsistent with information contained in the supplied documentation.

Documentation appears to indicate that payments have been made to iwi, despite consultation staff explicitly guaranteeing otherwise.

This inconsistency has reduced my confidence in the information being provided and raises questions about transparency and the availability of compensation mechanisms for affected landowners.

Long-Term Environmental Responsibility

The proposed lease term is approximately 35 years. When that period ends, the responsibility for dealing with the consequences of this development may fall to the next generation after we are gone.

I am concerned that this places the burden of decommissioning and environmental risk on our children and grandchildren. In my view, this approach is short-sighted and inconsistent with responsible stewardship of the land.

Are you committed to exercising kaitiakitanga and protecting the mauri of our taonga for future generations? I am concerned about the effects of contaminants on human health, the environment, and the spiritual and cultural values associated with this land.

Concerns Regarding Decommissioning

The documentation states:

"The land can return to agricultural use as there will be no soil or water contaminants left by the operation of the solar farm or the decommissioning process. This ensures there is no permanent loss of agricultural land. A Decommissioning Management Plan would be in place to ensure the process meets resource consent requirements and industry best practice."

However, during consultation, it became clear that a detailed decommissioning plan had not yet been developed.

When I asked what would happen to damaged solar panels, I was advised that there was currently no recycling solution available.

When I asked what would happen in the event of a battery fire, I was told that Fire and Emergency New Zealand would be trained at a later stage.

These responses do not provide confidence that the environmental risks have been adequately assessed, managed or prioritised.

Battery Fire and Contamination Risks

Battery fires can release hazardous substances, including hydrogen fluoride, hydrogen cyanide, carbon monoxide, sulphur oxides, and heavy metals.

There is potential for contaminated firefighting water to carry metals such as copper, nickel, manganese, and aluminium into surrounding soils and waterways.

There is also a risk that contaminants could enter groundwater systems, affecting drinking water supplies and private wells.

We and our neighbours would be inhaling fumes and drinking the rainwater collected from our roofs.

I raised these concerns during consultation but did not receive satisfactory answers.

Solar Panel Damage and Groundwater Risks

I also asked what assessment had been undertaken regarding broken or damaged solar panels and the potential for contaminants to leach into soils and aquifers. No clear response was provided. “Probably stored onsite until there is a plan for something else” was the answer.

Given the scale and duration of the proposed development, this issue requires detailed investigation and public disclosure.

Setback and Visual Amenity Concerns

During consultation, we noted that panels located on Part Himatangi X Block (35ha) were set back from existing residential properties. They said, “this was to reduce visual impacts”.

We advised the reps that a dwelling is intended to be built on our elevated section within the next few years and asked whether the same setback treatment could be applied to protect the future residence. The request was investigated, reported incorrectly, minimised and swept under the carpet.

I request that equivalent setbacks and visual mitigation measures be applied to our property.

This can be achieved by removing the 35ha block from the project if it goes ahead. 35ha removed from 436ha will have a small impact on the power output but huge impact for the close surrounding community.

Industry Experience and Appropriate Separation Distances

Consultation representatives advised that large-scale solar developments are relatively new in New Zealand and that the industry is still learning. So effectively there are no rules for NZ.

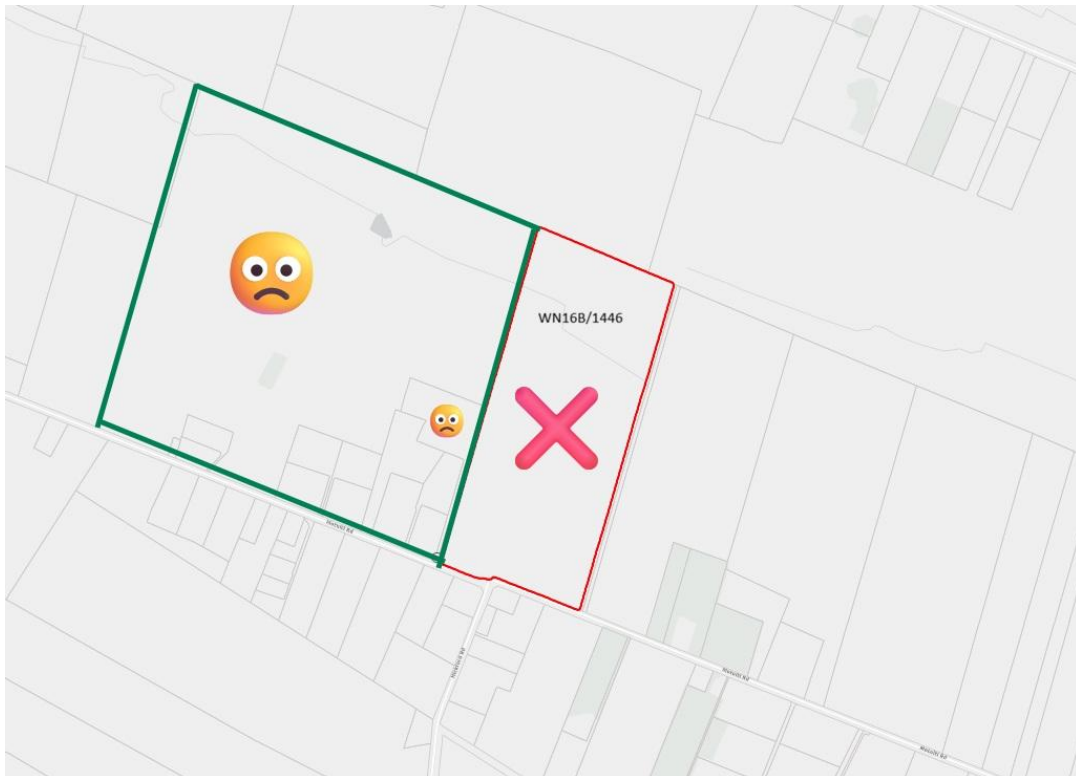
Given this acknowledgement, greater caution should be exercised. Overseas guidance and examples suggest that separation distances should be considered to minimise impacts on neighbouring properties and rural amenity.

The proposal should include a thorough assessment of appropriate setbacks and buffer zones, particularly where future residential development is already existing and planned.

Requested Outcomes

I request that Genesis and the consenting authority:

1. Reconsider the suitability of locating this industrial-scale solar development on productive agricultural land.
2. Provide compensation for the loss of amenity, loss of property values, and the impact on our planned retirement development.
3. Remove 35ha Part Himatangi X Block from the solar panel area.



4. Provide full and transparent information regarding compensation arrangements and agreements.

5. Develop and publicly disclose detailed plans for battery fire management, damaged panel disposal, recycling, and site decommissioning.

I oppose the proposal in its current form and believe significant issues remain unresolved.

Linda Shailer