

BRF-7016

23 October 2025

King Country Energy Limited
c/o- Vanessa Hamm
Partner
Holland Beckett

email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear Vanessa

Notice of Decisions on application for referral of the Kuratau Hydro-Electric Power Scheme project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

This notice of decisions is for an application received from King Country Energy Limited for referral of the Kuratau Hydro-Electric Power Scheme project (project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) that has been accepted by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) under section 21 and referred under section 26.

The project is to renew all the consents required for the ongoing operation of the Kuratau Hydro-Electric Power Scheme (HEPS) approximately 36 km southwest of Taupō and approximately 2.5 km north-west of Kuratau Village. The Scheme has an installed generation capacity of 6 megaWatts and generates on average 28 gigaWatt-hours per year and currently generates renewable electricity by:

- a. damming of the Kuratau River with an earth dam to form Lake Kuratau;
- b. taking and using water from Lake Kuratau by means of the Kuratau intake structure for hydroelectric power generation purposes;
- c. discharging water from the Kuratau spillway to the Kuratau River;
- d. discharging water and contaminants from the Kuratau Power Station intake canal to land; and
- e. discharging water from the Kuratau power station turbines to the Kuratau River by means of a tailrace.

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Fast-track referrals are administered on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure by the Ministry for the Environment | PO Box 10362 | Wellington 6143, New Zealand | NZBN: 9429041908853

The project also includes the ongoing use, maintenance and operation of existing structures associated with the HEPS. The project will require the proposed approvals:

- a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991.

The project can only be accepted if the Minister is satisfied the criteria in section 22 is met, which includes being satisfied the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits and referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes and is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process..

Decision on referral application

Whole project

The Minister has decided to accept the referral application for the whole project as he is satisfied it meets the criteria in section 22 (s 21(1)(c)) and to refer the project to the fast-track approvals process under section 26(2)(a).

Reasons for accepting referral application

The Minister is satisfied the project:

- (a) is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits; and
- (b) referring the project to the fast-track approvals process –
 - (i) would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes; and
 - (ii) is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

The Minister is satisfied the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits as it:

- (a) would enable the continued functioning of existing regionally or nationally significant infrastructure, being a hydro-electric power scheme
- (b) will support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions, through renewable electricity generation
- (c) will support climate change adaptation, reduce risks arising from natural hazards, or support recovery from events caused by natural hazards by enabling the continued operation of a lifeline utility

The Minister also considers the project:

- (a) would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes as the fast-track process prohibits public notification and limits rights of appeal to matters of law
- (b) is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process as the project is not novel in the New Zealand context or significantly different to those that expert panel members would consider under the RMA.

The Minister is satisfied that there is no reason he must decline the project under section 21(3) of the FTAA.

Specified matters for accepted referral application

The following person who lodged the referral application is the person authorised to lodge a substantive application for the project (s27(2)): King Country Energy Limited.

In relation to a substantive application for the project:

A deadline for lodging the application applies (s27(3)(b)(i)). The application must be lodged by: two years from the date of issue of this letter.

The persons or groups from whom a panel must invite comments from in addition to any specified in section 53 (s27(3)(b)(iii)):

- (a) Chief Executive of Transpower New Zealand Limited
- (b) Te Kōpu ā Kānapanapa

Other matters (section 28):

The Minister has directed under section 16(2)(c) that any panel that considers a substantive application for the project must comply with any applicable requirements provided for in a Treaty settlement, the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011, the Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019, a Mana Whakahono ā Rohe, or a joint management agreement (s28(3)(f)):

- (a) the relevant requirements in the Tūwharetoa settlement relating to notification of applications pertaining to the Taupō Catchment, the appointment of hearing commissioners, and consideration of Te Kaupapa Kaitiaki (as set out in paragraphs 44, 46 and 48 of the section 18 report); and
- (b) the relevant requirements in the JMA between Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board and Waikato Regional Council relating to notification of applications, provisions for joint decision-making, and appointing hearing commissioners (as set out in paragraphs 72 and 73 of the Section 18 report).

If you have any queries about this notice of decisions, please email referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the Application Lead – Max Gander-Cooper or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 225 537).

Yours sincerely



Ilana Miller

General Manager – Investment Strategy and Operations

cc: Written notice (s28(1)) for accept and decline projects:

the applicant – King Country Energy Limited

any person invited to comment (s17(1):

- relevant local authorities: Waikato Regional Council, Taupo District Council
- Minister for the Environment and relevant portfolio Ministers (Minister of Energy, Minister of Climate Change)
- Māori groups identified in the list provided to the Minister – Tūwharetoa Māori Trust Board, Te Kotahitanga o Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Hauā Iwi Trust, Te Whiringa Kākaho o Ngāti Hāua, Raukawa Settlement Trust, Ngāti Manunui, Ngāti Parekaawa, Waihi Pukawa Land Trust, Waituhi Kuratau Land Trust, Te Tumu Paeroa
- any other person – Chief Executive of Transpower New Zealand Limited, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Economic Growth

cc: Written notice where the Minister accepts the application and refers the project (s28(2)):

the Panel Convener (including all the related information received by the Minister)

the EPA (including all the related information received by the Minister)

the relevant administering agencies – Ministry for the Environment