

# Hon Mark Patterson

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Minister for Rural Communities  
Associate Minister of Agriculture  
Associate Minister for Regional Development



Ref: AM26-0255; COR26-0070

26 March 2026

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Application Lead Fast-track Application  
Email: [substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz](mailto:substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz)

Dear ██████████

Thank you, and the expert panel, for the opportunity to comment following the release of the draft decision to approve the Waitaha Hydro Project (FTAA-2505-1069) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.

As Rural Communities Minister, I am a strong supporter of the project and the direction signalled by the draft decision. Having personally visited the site, I cannot understate the importance of the Waitaha Hydro Project in enhancing local resilience, whilst strengthening New Zealand's renewable energy supply and supporting economic activity on the West Coast.

The project will deliver meaningful benefits to New Zealand's electricity supply, support regional economic growth, strengthen energy resilience and contribute to the nation's renewable energy infrastructure. These outcomes align with the government's strategic goals for energy security and long-term economic sustainability.

Overall, I consider that the draft decision reflects a balanced assessment of these considerations and appropriately recognises the wider public benefits the project is expected to deliver.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Patterson'.

Hon Mark Patterson  
**Minister for Rural Communities**

