

# 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-2508-1100

Hon Raynor Asher KC  
Fast-track Expert Panel Chair  
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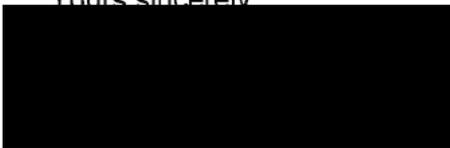
Dear Raynor,

Thank you for the invitation to comment on Far North Solar Farm Limited's Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA) substantive application, The Point Solar Farm (FTAA-2508-1100). I am responding in my capacity as Minister Responsible for RMA Reform and Minister for Infrastructure.

Renewable energy projects are important for growth and prosperity. Our view is our planning system has not been enabling of providing for these developments, hence the establishment of the FTAA. I have attached my comments relating to the Far North Solar Farm project 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 Far North Solar Farm project. Please take this letter of support as a reflection of the Government's economic growth and infrastructure priorities.

Yours sincerely



Hon Chris Bishop  
**Minister Responsible for RMA Reform**  
**Minister for Infrastructure**

## **Appendix 1 – Comments on the Far North Solar Farm project – FTAA-2508-1100**

### ***National and regional benefits***

The project is anticipated to meet the energy needs of approximately 100,000 households. The applicant indicates the project would provide power to support around 6% of the country's daytime peak energy demand. Infrastructure is important for growth and prosperity and renewable electricity generation is priority infrastructure.

### ***Section 6 Matters of national importance – protecting outstanding natural features***

The project is located in the Mackenzie Basin, an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) currently protected through section 6(b) and associated district plan provisions. The Government's resource management reform programme is intended to shift this approach by removing section 6 as a standalone statutory checklist and instead embed ONL values within system-level goals and national direction, so that nationally significant renewable electricity generation in high-value landscapes, such as the Mackenzie Basin are addressed more consistently.

In the meantime, and during the transition period of reform, applications considered under the fast-track will continue to be considered against existing section 6(b) requirements. Whether the significance of the impacts on the ONL are outweighed by the significance of the project's benefits will be a matter for the expert panel to determine.

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

The Point Solar Farm project is broadly consistent with the NPS-REG, including the objective to enable REG capacity and output to significantly increase, and to support achieving New Zealand's emissions targets.

The NPS-REG allows for REG development in all environments and locations, including areas that are of significance to Māori, however, decision makers must recognise and provide for Māori interests as well as the effects on landscapes. I note that the site is of significance to Māori, as well as being identified as an ONL. The expert panel will be best placed to assess these points.

### ***National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks 2008 - Amended December 2025 (NPS-EN)***

The Point Solar Farm will require connection to the existing electricity network, as well as establishing a new local electricity transmission network and substation.

The NPS-EN includes direction to provide and recognise EN's national significance, as well as secure the resilience for the wider network. The project is not considered contrary to the objectives and policies of the NPS-EN.

### ***Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities) Regulations 2009 (NES-ETA)***

The Point Solar Farm project requires a discretionary activity consent under Regulation 39 of the NES-ETA for an upgrade of an existing National Grid Transmission Line. This is required to connect the project to the national grid.

The NES-ETA applies to existing National Grid transmission lines and does not apply to the construction of new transmission lines or to substations. However, the proposal includes establishing a new Grid Injection Point (GIP) byway of two new substations. These new structures will be an upgrade and an increase in capacity to the existing network.

This aspect of the proposal includes new transmission lines for the purpose of electricity transmission and is considered consistent with the NES-ETA.

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

In 2025 the Government amended the RMA (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 and extends their lapse date to 10 years after the commencement date. Far North Solar Limited's request for their discharge permits to be issued for 35 years with a 10-year consent duration for construction activities is consistent with the Amendment Act and will provide certainty of renewable electricity generation from The Point Solar Farm project.