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**MINUTE 6 OF THE EXPERT PANEL**  
**Further (late) comment received**

**Lake Pūkaki Hydro Storage and dam Resilience Works [FTAA-2510-1120]**  
**[4 June 2026]**

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[1] The Panel has received the attached further comment on the substantive application from the Minister of for the South Island. The Minister was invited to comment and did so on 8 April 2026 as requested. The further comment has thus been received late.

[2] Section 81(6) of the Act confirms that a panel may consider information received following a section 53 invitation after the applicable time frame to do so has expired, provided it has not already made its decision on the substantive application. Further, clause 10(1) of Schedule 3 of the Act directs a panel to “*regulate its own procedure as it thinks appropriate, without procedural formality, and in a manner that best promotes the just and timely determination of the approvals sought in a substantive application*”.

[3] The Panel considers that, together, these provisions enable it to receive and consider the Minister for the South Island’s late further comment, and has determined to do so. Receiving the comment late will not impact on the Panel’s processing of the application and receiving the comment would promote its just determination.

[4] If the Minister’s comment had been received in time, the applicant would have had the opportunity to provide a response to it. In order to ensure natural justice prevails, the Panel therefore grants leave to the applicant to reply to the

Minister's comment by 5.00pm on 8 June 2026.

[5] All enquiries about the matters set out in this minute should be forwarded to Awesta Seddiqi, Application Lead, who can be contacted at [info@fasttrack.govt.nz](mailto:info@fasttrack.govt.nz)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'KRM Littlejohn', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kitt R M Littlejohn  
Expert Panel Chair

# Hon James Meager

Minister for the South Island  
Minister for Hunting and Fishing  
Minister for Youth  
Associate Minister of Transport



28 May 2026

Kitt R M Littlejohn  
Expert Panel Chair  
**By email:** substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz

## **Fast-track Approvals Act substantive application – Follow-up comments on Lake Pūkaki Hydro Storage and Dam Resilience Works FTAA-2510-1120**

Dear Kitt

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on Meridian Energy Limited's substantive application under the *Fast-track Approvals Act 2024* (FTAA 2024) for the Lake Pūkaki Hydro Storage and Dam Resilience Works (the Project).

I write to follow-up on the comments I previously provided on 8 April 2026 under the FTAA 2024, in relation to Meridian Energy Limited's substantive application for the Project.

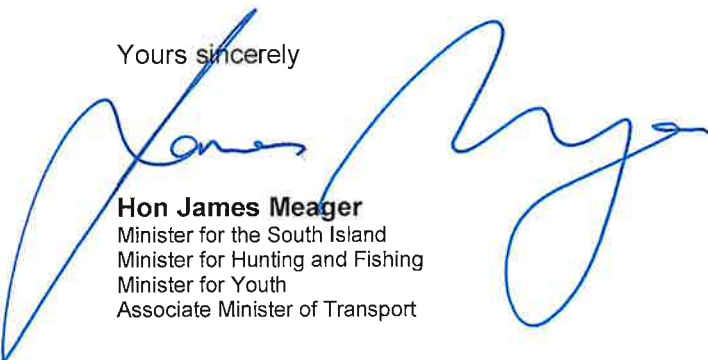
Since providing those comments, Transpower, in its role as System Operator, has raised significant concerns regarding the potential implications of unrestricted access to contingent hydro storage at Lake Pūkaki for New Zealand's security of electricity supply.

In particular, Transpower notes that while there may be economic benefits associated with easing access restrictions, those benefits should be carefully weighed against the risks identified in relation to system resilience and security of supply. These include the potential consequences arising from low inflow periods, major generation outages, and reduced contingent storage available during high-impact supply events.

Accordingly, any assessment of the claimed economic benefits should be considered in the context of the broader security of supply risks outlined by the System Operator.

I ask that these further comments be considered alongside my previous comments.

Yours sincerely

  
**Hon James Meager**  
Minister for the South Island  
Minister for Hunting and Fishing  
Minister for Youth  
Associate Minister of Transport

