

Hon Todd McClay

Minister of Agriculture
Minister of Forestry
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Jessie Richardson
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By email: substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz

TM010243

Dear Ms Richardson

Thank you and the expert panel for the opportunity to provide comments on the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 FTAA-2510-1121 Foxton Solar Farm as part of my responsibilities as Minister for Agriculture. My comments on this application are outlined below.

I am generally supportive of this application from Genesis Energy as the project is anticipated to deliver significant regional benefits and will improve outcomes for the area by:

- generating a significant amount of enough renewable energy to power the equivalent of 47,000 homes annually;
- creating over 100 jobs during the construction phase of the project; and
- significantly helping to lower wholesale power prices and reduce carbon emissions.

I note that the proposed project site is currently used primarily for pastoral farming and is partly located on Land Use Capability (LUC) class 3 land – meaning it would be subject to the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land. However, as the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land provides pathways for solar farms to locate on LUC class 1 to 3, I do not consider this should be a barrier to progressing this application.

I am pleased to see the applicants are considering sheep grazing under the proposed solar panels, allowing for primary production activity on the proposed site to continue.

This application as described is consistent with the Government's commitment to double the overall volume of electricity from renewable sources by 2050 and transition to a low-emissions future.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. I look forward to learning about the outcome of this application in due course.

Warm regards,

Hon Todd McClay
Minister for Agriculture