



FTAA–2605–1232: Application received for referral of the project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – Stage 1 decisions

Project Name: Rangitikei Solar Farm Project

Date submitted:	28 May 2026	Tracking #: BRF-01471	
Security level:	In-Confidence	MfE priority:	Urgent

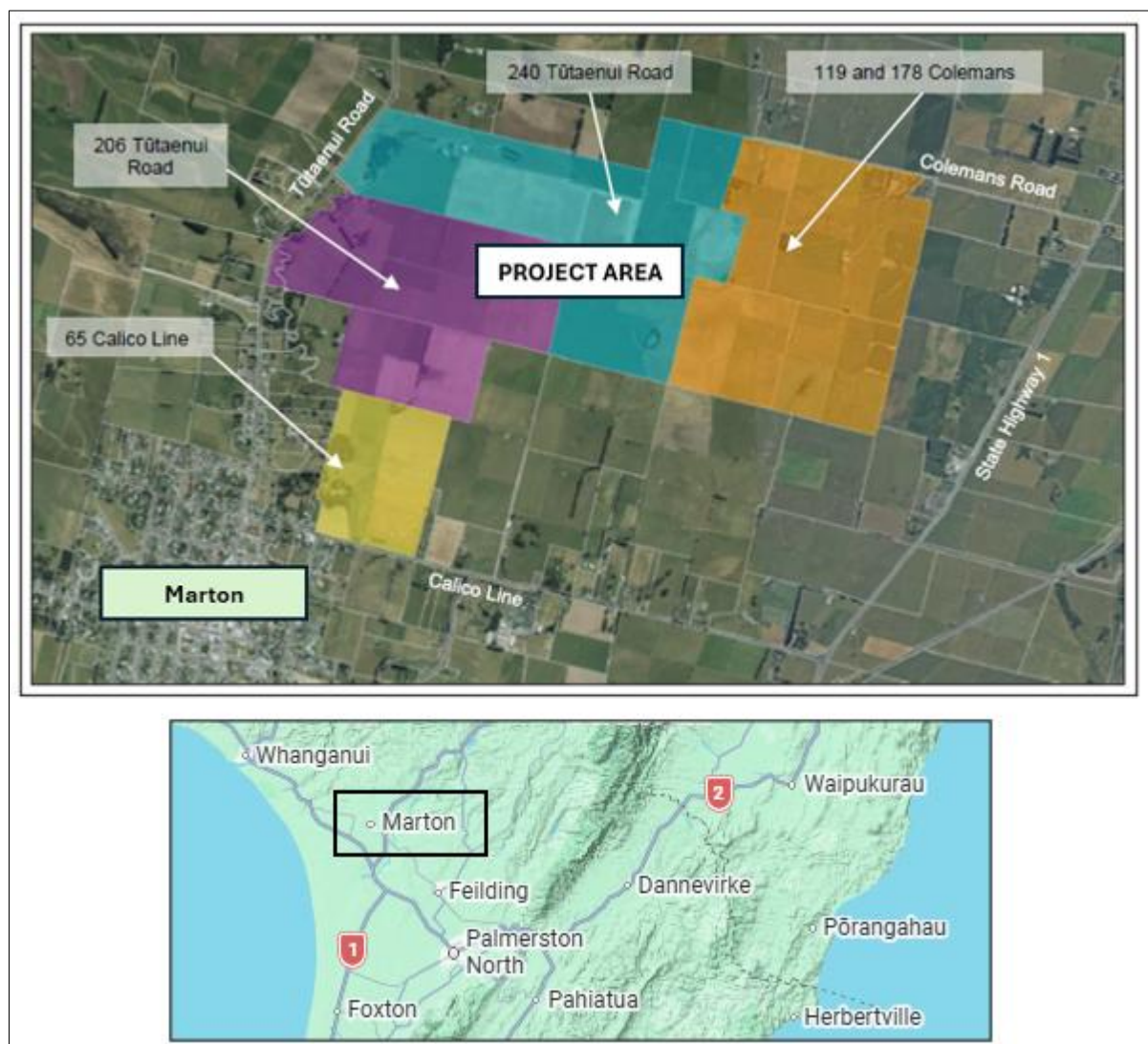
	Action sought:	Response by:
To Hon Chris Bishop, Minister for Infrastructure	Decisions on recommendations in Table A	5 June 2026

Actions for Minister's Office staff	Return the signed briefing to the Ministry for the Environment – email: FTAreferrals@mfe.govt.nz Send email to Ministers' to invite written comments
Number of appendices: 3	Appendices: 1. Statutory framework summary 2. Application documents for Rangitikei Solar Farm project 3. List of the Māori groups referred to in section 18(2)

Ministry for the Environment contacts:

Position	Name	Cell phone	1 st contact
Principal Author	Stephanie McNicholl		
Manager	Stephanie Frame	s 9(2)(a)	✓
General Manager	Ilana Miller	s 9(2)(a)	

Project area



Key messages

1. This briefing seeks your initial decisions on an application from FRV Services New Zealand Limited (the applicant) to refer the Rangitikei Solar Farm Project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process.
2. At this stage you can either decline an application for the reasons set out section 21, or provide the application to, and invite comments from, the parties identified in section 17. If you do not decline the application, you will receive a further briefing following receipt of invited comments, to inform your final decision on whether to refer the project.
3. The project is to construct, operate, maintain and where necessary, end-of-life decommissioning of a utility scale solar farm with a peak output of approximately 220 MWac (Megawatts Alternating Current) on a project area of approximately 507 hectares, located at 119 and 178 Colemans Road, 206 and 240 Tūtaenui Road and 65 Calico Line, near Marton in the Rangitikei District.

4. The project includes infrastructure and ancillary activities to connect and supply electricity to the National Grid that will comprise:
 - a. solar arrays installed on a single-axis tracking system or fixed-tilt mounts, inverters and transformers, underground cabling
 - b. a 190-megawatt (MW) battery energy storage system (BESS)
 - c. a new electricity transmission substation and associated connection to the Transpower overhead transmission lines running through the project site
 - d. ancillary infrastructure such as access, internal roads, roading upgrades, buildings for storage, maintenance and offices, water tanks and security fencing and lighting
 - e. landscape planting and ecological enhancement (screen planting, native riparian planting and pest control management) along watercourses and site boundaries.
5. The project will require the proposed approvals under the fast-track approvals process:
 - a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)
6. We have undertaken initial analysis of the referral application, and this is presented along with our considerations and recommendations in Table A.
7. We have decided the application is complete and complies with section 14 of the Act, as the application complies with section 13 requirements, may be capable of satisfying the criteria in section 22 and does not appear to involve an ineligible activity. The applicable fee and levy have been paid.
8. We recommend you progress consideration of the referral application to the next stage of analysis (Stage 2) and invite written comments from the parties prescribed in section 17(1) of the Act being:
 - a. Manawātū-Whanganui Regional Council and Rangitīkei District Council as the relevant local authorities
 - b. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development
 - c. the Minister for Energy as a relevant portfolio Minister
 - d. the Māori groups identified in Appendix 3.
9. We recommend that you invite written comments from additional persons under section 17(5) of the Act being:
 - a. the Chief Executive Transpower New Zealand – regarding capacity within and connection to the National Grid
 - b. the Chief Executive of, NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) – regarding connection to and upgrading of the intersection with State Highway 1
 - c. the Minister of Climate Change – regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation
 - d. the Minister for Economic Growth
 - e. the Minister for Regional Development.

Action sought

10. Please indicate your decisions on the recommendations in Table A.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Frame', is written on a light blue grid background.

Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Table A: Stage 1 analysis – FTAA–2605-1232

	Project Name		Applicant		Project Area	
Project details	Rangitikei Solar Farm Project		FRV Services New Zealand Limited		The project area is located at 119 and 178 Colemans Road, 206 and 240 Tūtaenui Road and 65 Calico Line, near Marton in the Rangitikei District.	
Project description	The project is to construct, operate, maintain and where necessary, end-of-life decommissioning of a utility scale solar farm with a peak output of approximately 220 MWac (Megawatts Alternating Current) on a project area of approximately 507 hectares located near Marton in the Rangitikei District. The project includes ancillary activities and infrastructure to connect and supply electricity to the National Grid that will comprise: a. solar arrays installed on a single-axis tracking system or fixed-tilt mounts, inverters and transformers, underground cabling b. a 190-megawatt (MW) battery energy storage system (BESS) c. a new electricity transmission substation and associated connection to the Transpower overhead transmission lines running through the project site d. ancillary infrastructure such as access, internal roads, roading upgrades, buildings for storage, maintenance and offices, water tanks and security fencing and lighting e. andscape planting and ecological enhancement (screen planting, native riparian planting and pest control management) along watercourses and site boundaries The project will require the proposed approvals under the fast-track approvals process: a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)					
Notification and/or consultation undertaken	As required by section 11, the applicant has:					
	Notified relevant local authorities	Notified relevant iwi authorities, hapū and Treaty settlement entities	Consulted relevant MACA groups	Consulted ngā hapū o Ngāti Porou	Notified relevant administering agencies	Notified holder of land to be exchanged
	a. Manawatū-Whanganui Regional Council b. Rangitikei District Council	a. Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa Charitable Trust b. Te Rūnanga o Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Inc.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Section 22 assessment criteria						
The project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits [section 22(1)(a)]	You <u>must</u> consider a relevant Government policy statement (GPS) [s22(1A)] No GPS has been identified as being relevant to the application. You <u>may</u> consider any of the following matters, or any other matters you consider relevant: <i>Will deliver new regionally or nationally significant infrastructure or enable the continued functioning of existing regionally or nationally significant infrastructure [s22(2)(a)(ii)]</i> The applicant considers the project will deliver new regionally and nationally significant infrastructure within the renewable energy sector. <i>Will deliver significant economic benefits [s22(2)(a)(iv)]</i> The applicant considers the project will deliver significant economic benefits by approximately 435 full-time equivalent (FTE) years of employment (an average of approximately 218–290 FTE jobs over the 18–24 month construction programme, on-site 250 FTE jobs during the 4–6 month installation phase) approximately \$69 million in GDP. <i>Will support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions [s22(2)(a)(vii)]</i> The applicant considers the project will support climate change mitigation by contributing to the renewable energy supply network, reducing reliance on fossil fuels, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. <i>Will support climate change adaptation, reduce risks arising from natural hazards, or support recovery from events caused by natural hazards [s22(2)(a)(viii)]</i> The applicant considers the project will support climate change adaptation and reduce risks arising from natural hazards (including flooding) through a design-led approach to avoid high-risk flood areas and maintain flood conveyance and storage capacity, and ensure infrastructure is located and resilient to natural hazard risks. <i>Is consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies [s22(2)(a)(x)]</i> The applicant considers the project is consistent with the planning documents and strategies including Manawatū-Whanganui Regional Policy Statement and Regional One Plan, Rangitikei District Plan and Community Spatial Plan / Pae Tawhiti Rangitikei Beyond.					
Referring the project to the fast-track approvals process [section 22(1)(b)]	<i>Would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes [s22(1)(b)(i)]</i> The applicant considers under standard RMA processes, the scale of the project would result in a hearing, risk of appeals and delays, and that the fast-track approvals process provides greater certainty and timelier decision-making. The standard RMA process could add two additional years to the timeframe and substantially increase consent-related costs. <i>Is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process [s22(1)(b)(ii)]</i> The applicant considers the project is not novel or complex and that as several solar farms have progressed through the fast-track approvals process, the issues are well understood.					
Minister invites comments	You <u>must</u> copy the application to, and invite written comments from [s17(1)]:		You <u>may</u> copy the application to, and invite written comments from, any other person [s17(5)]:		The Minister may request further information about a referral application from the applicant, or relevant local authorities, or relevant administering agencies to be provided within the time frame specified in the request.	

	a. relevant local authorities – Manawatū-Whanganui Regional Council and Rangitikei District Council b. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development c. relevant portfolio Ministers – the Minister for Energy d. the Māori groups identified in Appendix 3	We recommend you invite comments from: a. the Chief Executive of Transpower New Zealand Limited – regarding capacity within and connection to the National Grid b. the Chief Executive of NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) – regarding connection to and upgrading of the intersection with State Highway 1 c. the Minister of Climate Change – regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation response to greenhouse gas emissions d. the Minister for Economic Growth as the project proposes significant economic growth to the region e. the Minister for Regional Development as the project proposes significant utility scale regional development to the region.	N/A
Recommendations			Minister's decision
a.	Note that section 25 of the Act permits you to decline the referral application without inviting comments from the relevant local authorities, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and Minister for Māori Development, any other relevant portfolio Ministers, any relevant administering agencies and any Māori groups identified in the list provided.		Noted
b.	Note that you have not yet provided the application to, nor sought any written comments on it from, the parties listed in section 17(1) but that you are required to do so if you do not decline the application under section 21 of the Act.		Noted
c.	Note that section 17(5) of the Act permits you to forward an application to, and invite written comments from, any other person.		Noted
d.	Note that if written comments have been sought and provided within the required time frame you are required to consider them, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.		Noted
e.	Note that section 20 of the Act permits you to request further information from the applicant or relevant local authorities or relevant administering agencies at any time before you decide whether to accept or decline an application.		Noted
f.	Note that you have agreed to delegate to the Secretary for the Environment your responsibility to send all correspondence, other than to Ministers.		Noted
g.	Agree to progress the Rangitikei Solar Farm Project to our Stage 2 analysis (invite written comments and request section 18 Treaty report).		Yes / No
h.	Agree to provide the application to, and invite written comments from: i. Manawatū-Whanganui Regional Council and Rangitikei District Council as the relevant local authorities under section 17(1)(a) ii. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development under section 17(1)(b) iii. the Minister for Energy as a relevant portfolio Minister under section 17(1)(b) iv. the Māori groups identified in Appendix 3 under section 17(1)(d) v. any parties you are required to invite comments from under section 17(1)(d) and (e) who may be subsequently identified		Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
i.	Agree to provide the application to and invite written comments from the following additional persons under section 17(5): i. the Chief Executive of Transpower New Zealand Limited ii. the Chief Executive of NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi iii. the Minister of Climate Change iv. the Minister for Economic Growth v. the Minister for Regional Development		Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No Yes / No
j.	Agree to send the email to invite written comments from Ministers.		Yes / No

Signed:

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure

Date:

Appendix 1: Statutory framework summary

1. You are the sole decision maker for referral applications. If you accept a referral application, then the whole or part of the project will be referred to the fast-track approvals process.
2. If 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 provides for consideration of any document or procedural requirements, you must, where relevant:
 - a. give the document the same or equivalent effect through this process as it would have under any specified Act; and
 - b. comply with any applicable procedural requirements.
3. You must decline a referral application if:
 - a. you are satisfied the project does not meet the referral criteria in s22
 - b. you are satisfied the project involves an ineligible activity (s5)
 - c. you consider you do not have adequate information to inform your decision.
4. You may decline an application for any other reason, including those set out in s21(5) and even if the application meets the s22 referral criteria.
5. You can decline an application before or after inviting comments under s17(1). However, if comments have been sought and provided within the required time frame, you must consider them, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.
6. If you do not decline a referral application at this initial stage you must copy the application to, and invite written comments from:
 - a. the relevant local authorities
 - b. the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti, and the Minister for Māori Development
 - c. any other relevant portfolio Ministers
 - d. the relevant administering agencies
 - e. the Māori groups identified by the responsible agency
 - f. the owners of Māori land in the project area (if applicable)
 - g. you may provide the application to and invite comments from any other person.
7. You can request further information from an applicant, any relevant local authority or any relevant administering agency at any time before you decide to decline or accept a referral application (see section 20 of the Act).
8. However, if further information has been sought and provided within the required time frame you must consider it, along with the referral application, before deciding to decline the application.

Appendix 2: Application documents for Rangitīkei Solar Farm project

Appendix 3: List of Māori groups referred to in section 18(2)

Name of group	Type of group (section of Act)
Ngā Wairiki-Ngāti Apa Charitable Trust	Iwi authority (s18(2)(a)); Treaty settlement entity (s18(2)(a))
Te Rūnanga o Raukawa Incorporated	any other Māori groups with relevant interests (s18(2)(k))
Te Rūnangao Ngāti Hauiti	any other Māori groups with relevant interests (s18(2)(k))
Ngāti Parewahawaha	any other Māori groups with relevant interests (s18(2)(k))
Mōkai Pātea Waitangi Claims Trust	any other Māori groups with relevant interests (s18(2)(k))