16 September 2026
Job No: 1097533

Minister for Infrastructure
referral@fasttrack.govt.nz

Attention: Antonia Croft

Dear Antonia

Response to request for further information on the referral application of the Western Bays Solar Farm Project

Further to your letter dated 10 September 2026 requesting further information pursuant to section 20 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024, we write to provide a response to your queries. The information requested is shown in italics followed by our response, and our numbering corresponds to the numbering set out in your letter.

1. there are land parcels within the project area that are subject to Part IVA of the Conservation Act 1987. Please provide sufficient information, including mapping, surveying and/or supporting assessments, to identify all streams, tributaries and wetlands within the project area on any land parcels subject to Part IVA, to confirm whether they meet the definition of a "qualifying water body" under that Act.

Records of title that reference Part IV A of the Conservation Act 1987

There are no watercourses on land parcels within the Western Bays Solar Farm Project[1] where the record of title notes the application of Part IV A of the Conservation Act 1987. Details are provided below.

Attachment 2 to the Referral Application provides property plans and copies of the records of title. The records of title for those highlighted properties in the table below reference Part IV A Conservation Act 1987:

Property Address	Title Reference & Legal Description	Land Owner(s)	Site size (approx.)	Part IV A Ref?	Proposed site use
624 Karangahape Road	Section 3 Survey Office Plan 59130 [SA57C/924]	Theland Tahi Farm Group Limited	13.49 Ha	Yes	Solar Farm and Transmission Line Corridor

[1] The Western Bays Solar Farm Project comprises the Solar Farm, Transmission Line Corridor, and Grid Injection Point (GIP).

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Property Address	Title Reference & Legal Description	Land Owner(s)	Site size (approx.)	Part IV A Ref?	Proposed site use
773 Karangahape Road	Section 3 Block X Karangahape Survey District [SA43B/499]	Theland Tahi Farm Group Limited	281.593 Ha	No	
808 Karangahape Road	Section 4 Block X Karangahape Survey District [SA43B/384]	Theland Tahi Farm Group Limited	294.772 Ha	No	
No address	Section 5 Survey Office Plan 59130 [SA50B/764]	Theland Tahi Farm Group Limited	37.4 Ha	Yes	
632 Karangahape Road	Section 4 Survey Office Plan 59130 [SA50B/763]	Theland Tahi Farm Group Limited	0.2143 Ha	Yes	Solar Farm
403, 423, 454 and 467 Karangahape Road and 5767, 5788 Western Bay Road	Part Hauhungaroa 1D3B Block [SA7B/33]	The Proprietors of Hauhungaroa 1D3B	1742.576 Ha	No	Transmission Line Corridor and Grid Injection Point
Karangahape Road	N/A	Taupo District Council	N/A	No	Road widening

Attachment 7 of the Referral Application is an Ecological Assessment which includes supporting maps in Appendix A. Figure 2 shows the ecological features on the site including LINZ mapped river lines. No watercourses are shown on the land parcels highlighted in the property table above. The description of Figure 2 clarifies that the Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) river lines intersecting with the Solar Farm Site were ground-truthed and only consist of overland flow paths.

<u>Records of title that do not reference Part IV A of the Conservation Act 1987</u>

There is a watercourse on one land parcel within the project area, however there is no notation on the record of title referencing the Conservation Act 1987, and that watercourse is not a qualifying water body. For completeness, details relating to the parcel of land and the watercourse are provided below.

The proposed transmission line crosses the Orongopioi Stream on the Grid Injection Point (GIP) site. This is shown on Figure 4 of Appendix A of the Ecological Assessment. This is on Part Hauhungaroa 1D3B Block (SA7B/33). There is no notation on the record of title for that property referencing the Conservation Act. However, for completeness, the photographs below show Orongopioi Stream in this location. The stream was described by ecologists from Beca Limited who visited the site as being generally 0.5 m – 2 m wide at the time of the site visit. One short (5 m long) section had an area of wetland approximately 3-4 m wide. Downstream of the site approximately 400 m the stream bed was approximately 0.5 m – 1.5 m wide. These areas are shown in the photographs below.



Photo 1. Orongopioi stream within the GIP site (Source: Beca Limited)



Photo 2. Orongopioi stream within the GIP site (Source: Beca Limited)



Photo 3. Area of wetland within the GIP site (Source: Beca Limited)

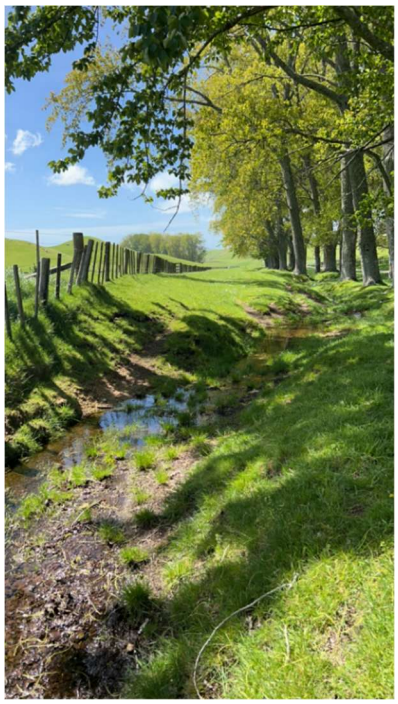


Photo 4. Orongopioi Stream approximately 400 m downstream (Source: Beca Limited)

2. with regard to the above, please confirm whether any marginal strips are present, and if so, please provide details of their location, extent and legal status, and identify whether any aspect of the proposed project would occur within, over, across, or otherwise affect those marginal strips.

Section 24(c) of Part IV A of the Conservation Act 1987 provides that a 20 m marginal strip is reserved from the sale or disposition of land by the Crown along the bed of any river or any stream, being a bed that has an average width of 3 m or more.

In relation to the rivers/streams on the Western Bays Solar Farm Project properties:

- Three parcels on the Solar Farm site include a "Part IV A of the Conservation Act 1987" notation on their title but there are no watercourses on these land parcels.
- The potential "watercourses" on the remainder of the Solar Farm site are overland flow paths i.e. not a river or stream with a defined bed.
- Based on the information above, and Department of Conservation guidance[2], the Orongopioi Stream does not have an average bed width of 3 m or more so would not be a qualifying water body and no marginal strip would apply.

Therefore, there are no marginal strips present on the Western Bays Solar Farm Project properties.

3. if marginal strips are present and are likely to be affected by the project, please identify whether any approvals, concessions, easements, licences or other authorisations under the Conservation Act 1987 would be required, and provide the basis for that assessment.

No marginal strips are present and therefore no approvals, concessions, easements, licences or other authorisations under the Conservation Act 1987 are required.

We trust this satisfactorily responds to your queries.

Kind regards

Alia Cederman
Principal Planner

[2] Department of Conservation, 2008, *The Identification of Water Bodies that will qualify for Marginal Strips*, DOCDM-192684 Marginal strip guideline, https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/about-doc/role/legislation/identification-of-water-bodies-that-will-qualify-for-marginal-strips.pdf