

From: [Infrastructure Portfolio](#)
To: [Nicola Willis \(MIN\)](#); [Shane Jones \(MIN\)](#); [Penny Simmonds \(MIN\)](#); [Simon Watts \(MIN\)](#)
Cc: [FTAreferalls](#)
Subject: Invitation to comment on Fast-track referral application for the Clutha Hydro-Scheme - Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – FTAA-2506-1080
Date: Thursday, 24 July 2025 7:53:29 am
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[Comments Form for Invited Ministers.docx](#)

To:

Minister for Economic Growth
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for the Environment
Minister for Energy

Dear Ministers,

Hon Chris Bishop, the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister), has asked for me to write to you on his behalf. The Minister has received an application from Contact Energy Limited for referral of the Clutha Hydro-Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track process (application reference FTAA-2506-1080).

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.

Invitation to comment on referral application

I write in accordance with section 17 of the Act to invite you to provide written comments on the referral application. I have provided summary details of the project below.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received by **return email** within **20 working days** of receipt of this email. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Any comments submitted will contribute to the Minister's decision on whether to accept the referral application and to refer the project.

If you do not wish to provide comments, please let us know as soon as possible so we can proceed with processing the application without delay.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and to refer the project, the Applicant will need to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then lodge their substantive application for the approvals needed for the project. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

Process

The application documents are accessible through the Fast-track portal. Please note that application documents may contain commercially sensitivity information and should not be shared widely. If you haven't used the portal before, you can request access by emailing ftareferalls@mfe.govt.nz. Once you are registered and have accepted the terms and conditions, you will receive a link to view the documents. Existing users will be able to see application documents via the request when logging into the portal. Should you need for your agency to provide any supplementary information, a nominated person can be provided access to the portal, access can be requested by emailing ftareferalls@mfe.govt.nz.

To submit your comments on the application, you can either provide a letter or complete the attached template for written comments and return it by replying to this email, infrastructure.portfolio@parliament.govt.nz.

Before the due date, if you have any queries about this email or need assistance with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz. Further information is available at <https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/>.

Important Information

Please note that all comments received from Ministers invited to comment will be subject to the Official Information Act 1982. Comments received will be proactively released at the time the Minister for Infrastructure makes a referral decision, unless the Minister providing comments advises the Minister for Infrastructure's office they are to be withheld, at the time they are submitted.

If a Conflict of Interest is identified by the Minister providing comments at any stage of providing comments, please inform my office and the Cabinet Office immediately. The Cabinet Office will provide advice and, if appropriate, initiate a request to the Prime Minister to agree to a transfer of the project/portfolio invite to another Minister (a request to transfer a COI from one Minister to another can take 1-7 days).

Project summary

Project name	Clutha Hydro-Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply
Applicant	Contact Energy Limited
Location	Lake Hāwea, Otago

Project description	Contact intends to use the Fast-track process to enable a larger ability to adjust its generation capacity and increase critical energy storage levels to manage dry year risks by lowering the allowable operating range of the lake. The rationale of the project also includes providing a source of flexible supply of hydroelectricity where intermittent generation forms of electricity generation such as wind and solar cannot, due to their reliance on prevailing conditions (such as the weather). Contact considers that the project will also help achieve New Zealand's decarbonisation goals quickly and increase the security of New Zealand's electricity supply. Contact already holds resource consents to operate and dam the Lake at a normal operating range between 338 – 346 metres above sea level (masl) and for contingent storage at a range between 336 – 338 masl. The project seeks new consents under section 42(4)(a) of the Act to enable the normal minimum operating level of the lake to be lowered to 336 masl, and for contingent storage to 333 masl during a 4% Electricity Risk Curve alert (ERC) and to 330 masl during an 8% ERC. The ERC is the alert level which indicates the risk level of an electricity supply shortage (or low contingent storage event) and can only be determined by the system operator, in this instance Transpower New Zealand. The project additionally seeks a change to current consent conditions under section 42(4)(b) of the Act. Specifically, Contact seeks to change those conditions which specify the minimum allowable lake level and contingency storage. Contact considers this necessary to implement the project by ensuring current consent conditions do not conflict with the proposed new consents. Contact considers these variations to be largely administrative in nature to enable the project and intends to process these simultaneously with the new consents sought under the Act. No construction works are proposed.
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Yours sincerely
Hon Chris Bishop

Minister for Infrastructure



Office of Hon Chris Bishop

Minister of Housing | Minister for Infrastructure | Minister Responsible for RMA Reform | Minister of Transport | Associate Minister of Finance | Associate Minister for Sport & Recreation | Leader of the House | MP for Hutt South

Office: 04 817 6802 | EW 6.3
Email: c.bishop@ministers.govt.nz Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

Email disclaimer:

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FTAA-2506-1080

Kate Timms-Dean
General Manager
Aukaha (1997) Limited

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Kate

Invitation to provide written comments on an application for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

An application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Contact Energy Limited (the applicant) for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. [Section 22](#) of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(d) of the Act (which requires consultation with relevant Māori groups identified under section 18(2)). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for consultation under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in confidence and should not be forwarded or comments sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **20 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

fasttrack.govt.nz | contact@fasttrack.govt.nz | 0800 FASTRK

Fast-track referrals are administered on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure by the Ministry for the Environment | PO Box 10362 | Wellington 6143, New Zealand | NZBN: 9429041908853

If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of \$2,000 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025. For information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fasttrack webpage on [Cost recovery for agencies](#).

If the Minister decides to accept the application and to refer the project, the applicant will need to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then lodge their substantive application for the approvals needed for the project. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

Please upload your comments directly via the portal by completing the template for written comments provided in Attachment 1. Alternatively, you are welcome to upload your comments via the portal using your own format or document, if preferred.

Before the due date, if you have any queries about this letter, please email referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and refer to the name of the Application Lead – Ben Bunting. If you need assistance with the application portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā



Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

cc s 9(2)(a)
consents@aukaha.co.nz

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2506-1080
Project name	Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply
Applicant name	Contact Energy Limited
Project summary details	Lake Hāwea (the Lake) is a large, glacial lake with a body measuring 5 kilometres wide and 20 kilometres long, located in the Otago Region approximately 17 kilometres north of Wānaka. The Lake forms part of the wider Clutha Hydro Scheme (CHS) which is owned and operated by the applicant. CHS is existing nationally significant infrastructure that provides 10% of New Zealand’s electricity. The project seeks to use the Fast-track process to enable an adjustment of the applicant’s generation capacity and an increase of the Lake’s critical energy storage levels to manage dry year risks. The project also aims to provide a flexible source of hydroelectricity to back up intermittent generation like wind and solar, which depend on weather conditions. The applicant considers the project will help achieve New Zealand’s decarbonisation goals quickly and increase the security of New Zealand’s electricity supply. The applicant already holds resource consents to operate Lake Hāwea between 338–346 metres above sea level (masl), with contingent storage allowed down to 336 masl. The application seeks new consents to enable the normal minimum operating level of the Lake to be lowered to 336 masl, and for contingent storage to 333 masl during a 4% Electricity Risk Curve alert (ERC) and to 330 masl during an 8% ERC. The ERC is the alert level which indicates the risk level of an electricity supply shortage (or low contingent storage event) and can only be determined by the system operator, Transpower New Zealand. The project additionally seeks a change to current consent conditions, specifically, those conditions which specify the minimum allowable lake level and contingent storage. The applicant considers this necessary to implement the project by ensuring current consent conditions do not conflict with the proposed new consents. The applicant considers these variations to be largely administrative in nature to enable the project and intends to process these simultaneously with the new consents sought.

FTAA-2506-1080

Louise Dennison
Hokonui Rūnanga

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Louise

Invitation to provide written comments on an application for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

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Nāku noa, nā



Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

cc [s 9\(2\)\(a\)](#)
[hokonui.office@ngaitahu.iwi.nz](#)

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2506-1080
Project name	Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply
Applicant name	Contact Energy Limited
Project summary details	Lake Hāwea (the Lake) is a large, glacial lake with a body measuring 5 kilometres wide and 20 kilometres long, located in the Otago Region approximately 17 kilometres north of Wānaka. The Lake forms part of the wider Clutha Hydro Scheme (CHS) which is owned and operated by the applicant. CHS is existing nationally significant infrastructure that provides 10% of New Zealand’s electricity. The project seeks to use the Fast-track process to enable an adjustment of the applicant’s generation capacity and an increase of the Lake’s critical energy storage levels to manage dry year risks. The project also aims to provide a flexible source of hydroelectricity to back up intermittent generation like wind and solar, which depend on weather conditions. The applicant considers the project will help achieve New Zealand’s decarbonisation goals quickly and increase the security of New Zealand’s electricity supply. The applicant already holds resource consents to operate Lake Hāwea between 338–346 metres above sea level (masl), with contingent storage allowed down to 336 masl. The application seeks new consents to enable the normal minimum operating level of the Lake to be lowered to 336 masl, and for contingent storage to 333 masl during a 4% Electricity Risk Curve alert (ERC) and to 330 masl during an 8% ERC. The ERC is the alert level which indicates the risk level of an electricity supply shortage (or low contingent storage event) and can only be determined by the system operator, Transpower New Zealand. The project additionally seeks a change to current consent conditions, specifically, those conditions which specify the minimum allowable lake level and contingent storage. The applicant considers this necessary to implement the project by ensuring current consent conditions do not conflict with the proposed new consents. The applicant considers these variations to be largely administrative in nature to enable the project and intends to process these simultaneously with the new consents sought.

FTAA-2506-1080

Shane Ellison
Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Shane

Invitation to provide written comments on an application for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

An application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Contact Energy Limited (the applicant) for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. [Section 22](#) of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(d) of the Act (which requires consultation with relevant Māori groups identified under section 18(2)). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application.

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If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **20 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

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If the Minister decides to accept the application and to refer the project, the applicant will need to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then lodge their substantive application for the approvals needed for the project. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

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Before the due date, if you have any queries about this letter, please email referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and refer to the name of the Application Lead – Ben Bunting. If you need assistance with the application portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'I' followed by a horizontal stroke that tapers to the right.

Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

cc admin@puketeraki.nz

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2506-1080
Project name	Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply
Applicant name	Contact Energy Limited
Project summary details	Lake Hāwea (the Lake) is a large, glacial lake with a body measuring 5 kilometres wide and 20 kilometres long, located in the Otago Region approximately 17 kilometres north of Wānaka. The Lake forms part of the wider Clutha Hydro Scheme (CHS) which is owned and operated by the applicant. CHS is existing nationally significant infrastructure that provides 10% of New Zealand’s electricity. The project seeks to use the Fast-track process to enable an adjustment of the applicant’s generation capacity and an increase of the Lake’s critical energy storage levels to manage dry year risks. The project also aims to provide a flexible source of hydroelectricity to back up intermittent generation like wind and solar, which depend on weather conditions. The applicant considers the project will help achieve New Zealand’s decarbonisation goals quickly and increase the security of New Zealand’s electricity supply. The applicant already holds resource consents to operate Lake Hāwea between 338–346 metres above sea level (masl), with contingent storage allowed down to 336 masl. The application seeks new consents to enable the normal minimum operating level of the Lake to be lowered to 336 masl, and for contingent storage to 333 masl during a 4% Electricity Risk Curve alert (ERC) and to 330 masl during an 8% ERC. The ERC is the alert level which indicates the risk level of an electricity supply shortage (or low contingent storage event) and can only be determined by the system operator, Transpower New Zealand. The project additionally seeks a change to current consent conditions, specifically, those conditions which specify the minimum allowable lake level and contingent storage. The applicant considers this necessary to implement the project by ensuring current consent conditions do not conflict with the proposed new consents. The applicant considers these variations to be largely administrative in nature to enable the project and intends to process these simultaneously with the new consents sought.

James Palmer
Secretary for the Environment
Ministry for the Environment
PO Box 10362
Wellington 6143

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear James

Invitation to provide written comments on an application for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

An application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Contact Energy Limited (the applicant) for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Storage project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. [Section 22](#) of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(1)(c) of the Act (which requires the Minister to seek comments on a referral application from the relevant administering agencies). I invite the Ministry for the Environment to provide written comments on the referral application as the administering agency for the Resource Management Act 1991.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for consultation under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in confidence and should not be forwarded or comments sought from anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **20 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

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If the Minister decides to accept the application and to refer the project, the applicant will need to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then lodge their substantive application for the approvals needed for the project. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

Please upload your comments directly via the portal by completing the template for written comments provided in Attachment 1. Alternatively, you are welcome to upload your comments via the portal using your own format or document, if preferred.

Before the due date, if you have any queries about this letter, please email referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and refer to the name of the Application Lead – Ben Bunting. If you need assistance with the application portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'I' followed by a horizontal stroke that tapers to a point.

Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

cc s 9(2)(a)
adminagencyftaa@mfe.govt.nz

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2506-1080
Project name	Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply
Applicant name	Contact Energy Limited
Project summary details	Lake Hāwea (the Lake) is a large, glacial lake with a body measuring 5 kilometres wide and 20 kilometres long, located in the Otago Region approximately 17 kilometres north of Wānaka. The Lake forms part of the wider Clutha Hydro Scheme (CHS) which is owned and operated by the applicant. CHS is existing nationally significant infrastructure that provides 10% of New Zealand's electricity. The project seeks to use the Fast-track process to enable an adjustment of the applicant's generation capacity and an increase of the Lake's critical energy storage levels to manage dry year risks. The project also aims to provide a flexible source of hydroelectricity to back up intermittent generation like wind and solar, which depend on weather conditions. The applicant considers the project will help achieve New Zealand's decarbonisation goals quickly and increase the security of New Zealand's electricity supply. The applicant already holds resource consents to operate Lake Hāwea between 338–346 metres above sea level (masl), with contingent storage allowed down to 336 masl. The application seeks new consents to enable the normal minimum operating level of the Lake to be lowered to 336 masl, and for contingent storage to 333 masl during a 4% Electricity Risk Curve alert (ERC) and to 330 masl during an 8% ERC. The ERC is the alert level which indicates the risk level of an electricity supply shortage (or low contingent storage event) and can only be determined by the system operator, Transpower New Zealand. The project additionally seeks a change to current consent conditions, specifically, those conditions which specify the minimum allowable lake level and contingent storage. The applicant considers this necessary to implement the project by ensuring current consent conditions do not conflict with the proposed new consents. The applicant considers these variations to be largely administrative in nature to enable the project and intends to process these simultaneously with the new consents sought.

FTAA-2506-1080

Richard Saunders
Chief Executive
Otago Regional Council

s 9(2)(a)

Dear Richard

Invitation to provide written comments on an application for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Storage project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

An application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Contact Energy Limited (the applicant) for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Storage project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. [Section 22](#) of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(1)(a) of the Act, I invite Otago Regional Council to provide written comments on the referral application, including the following matters:

1. The applicant already holds resource consents issued by Otago Regional Council to operate the Clutha Hydro Scheme, including resource consent to dam Lake Hāwea (Consent No. 2001.383). The applicant intends to use the fast-track process to apply for new consents **in addition to** variations of current consent conditions, to ensure that current consent conditions do not conflict with the proposed new consents. Please provide information on how the relationship between the proposed new consents and the proposed variations to current consent conditions may be affected, including an explanation on why the proposed new consents would be required in addition to the variations.

Under section 17(3) of the Act and without limiting any general comments under subsection (1)(a), Otago Regional Council **must** provide comments advising on the following matters:

2. Any applications that have been lodged with the Council that would be a competing application or applications if a substantive application for the project were lodged. If no such applications exist, please provide written confirmation.

3. In relation to projects seeking approval of a resource consent under section 42(4)(a) of the Act, whether there any existing resource consents issued where sections 124C(1)(c) or 165ZI of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) could apply, if the project were to be applied for as a resource consent under the RMA. If no such consents exist, please provide written confirmation.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for consultation under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in confidence and should not be forwarded or comments sought from anyone outside of your organisation.

Written comments must be received within **20 working days** of receipt of this letter and a copy of the application. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and to refer the project, the applicant will need to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then lodge their substantive application for the approvals needed for the project. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

Please upload your comments directly via the portal by completing the template for written comments provided in Attachment 1. Alternatively, you are welcome to upload your comments via the portal using your own format or document, if preferred.

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Yours sincerely



Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

cc: s 9(2)(a) [redacted]
[redacted]
consent.fasttrack@orc.govt.nz
consent.enquiries@orc.govt.nz

Appendix A – Project summary details

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FTAA-2506-1080

Mike Theelen
Chief Executive
Queenstown Lakes District Council

s 9(2)(a)

Dear Mike

Invitation to provide written comments on an application for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Storage project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

An application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Contact Energy Limited (the applicant) for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Storage project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. [Section 22](#) of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(1)(a) of the Act, I invite Queenstown Lakes District Council to provide written comments on the referral application.

Under section 17(3) of the Act and without limiting any general comments under subsection (1)(a), Otago Regional Council **must** provide comments advising on the following matters:

1. Any applications that have been lodged with the Council that would be a competing application or applications if a substantive application for the project were lodged. If no such applications exist, please provide written confirmation.
2. In relation to projects seeking approval of a resource consent under section 42(4)(a) of the Act, whether there any existing resource consents issued where sections 124C(1)(c) or 165ZI of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) could apply, if the project were to be applied for as a resource consent under the RMA. If no such consents exist, please provide written confirmation.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for consultation under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in confidence and should not be forwarded or comments sought from anyone outside of your organisation.

Written comments must be received within **20 working days** of receipt of this letter and a copy of the application. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

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Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ilana Miller', with a stylized, flowing script.

Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

cc: s 9(2)(a) [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2506-1080
Project name	Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply
Applicant name	Contact Energy Limited
Project summary details	Lake Hāwea (the Lake) is a large, glacial lake with a body measuring 5 kilometres wide and 20 kilometres long, located in the Otago Region approximately 17 kilometres north of Wānaka. The Lake forms part of the wider Clutha Hydro Scheme (CHS) which is owned and operated by the applicant. CHS is existing nationally significant infrastructure that provides 10% of New Zealand's electricity. The project seeks to use the Fast-track process to enable an adjustment of the applicant's generation capacity and an increase of the Lake's critical energy storage levels to manage dry year risks. The project also aims to provide a flexible source of hydroelectricity to back up intermittent generation like wind and solar, which depend on weather conditions. The applicant considers the project will help achieve New Zealand's decarbonisation goals quickly and increase the security of New Zealand's electricity supply. The applicant already holds resource consents to operate Lake Hāwea between 338–346 metres above sea level (masl), with contingent storage allowed down to 336 masl. The application seeks new consents to enable the normal minimum operating level of the Lake to be lowered to 336 masl, and for contingent storage to 333 masl during a 4% Electricity Risk Curve alert (ERC) and to 330 masl during an 8% ERC. The ERC is the alert level which indicates the risk level of an electricity supply shortage (or low contingent storage event) and can only be determined by the system operator, Transpower New Zealand. The project additionally seeks a change to current consent conditions, specifically, those conditions which specify the minimum allowable lake level and contingent storage. The applicant considers this necessary to implement the project by ensuring current consent conditions do not conflict with the proposed new consents. The applicant considers these variations to be largely administrative in nature to enable the project and intends to process these simultaneously with the new consents sought.

FTAA-2506-1080

Meriani Pile
Te Ao Mārama Incorporated

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Meriani

Invitation to provide written comments on an application for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

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The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. [Section 22](#) of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

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Nāku noa, nā

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Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

cc s 9(2)(a)
office@tami.maori.nz

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2506-1080
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Applicant name	Contact Energy Limited
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FTAA-2506-1080

Barry Bragg
Chair
Te Rūnanga o Awarua

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Barry

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Nāku noa, nā

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Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

cc s 9(2)(a)
office@awaruarunaka.iwi.nz

Appendix A – Project summary details

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FTAA-2506-1080

Justin Tipa
Te Rūnanga o Moeraki

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Justin

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Nāku noa, nā

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Ilana Miller
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Appendix A: Project summary details

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FTAA-2506-1080

Justin Tipa
Chair
Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Justin

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Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

cc [s 9\(2\)\(a\)](#)
[ttw@ngaitahu.iwi.nz](#)

Appendix A – Project summary details

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FTAA-2506-1080

Kasmira Peterson
Te Rūnanga o Ōraka-Aparima

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Kasmira

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Nāku noa, nā

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Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

cc office@orakaaparima.org.nz

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FTAA-2506-1080

Andrew Rouvi
Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Andrew

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Ilana Miller
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cc office@tro.org.nz
s 9(2)(a)

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Project name	Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply
Applicant name	Contact Energy Limited
Project summary details	Lake Hāwea (the Lake) is a large, glacial lake with a body measuring 5 kilometres wide and 20 kilometres long, located in the Otago Region approximately 17 kilometres north of Wānaka. The Lake forms part of the wider Clutha Hydro Scheme (CHS) which is owned and operated by the applicant. CHS is existing nationally significant infrastructure that provides 10% of New Zealand’s electricity. The project seeks to use the Fast-track process to enable an adjustment of the applicant’s generation capacity and an increase of the Lake’s critical energy storage levels to manage dry year risks. The project also aims to provide a flexible source of hydroelectricity to back up intermittent generation like wind and solar, which depend on weather conditions. The applicant considers the project will help achieve New Zealand’s decarbonisation goals quickly and increase the security of New Zealand’s electricity supply. The applicant already holds resource consents to operate Lake Hāwea between 338–346 metres above sea level (masl), with contingent storage allowed down to 336 masl. The application seeks new consents to enable the normal minimum operating level of the Lake to be lowered to 336 masl, and for contingent storage to 333 masl during a 4% Electricity Risk Curve alert (ERC) and to 330 masl during an 8% ERC. The ERC is the alert level which indicates the risk level of an electricity supply shortage (or low contingent storage event) and can only be determined by the system operator, Transpower New Zealand. The project additionally seeks a change to current consent conditions, specifically, those conditions which specify the minimum allowable lake level and contingent storage. The applicant considers this necessary to implement the project by ensuring current consent conditions do not conflict with the proposed new consents. The applicant considers these variations to be largely administrative in nature to enable the project and intends to process these simultaneously with the new consents sought.

FTAA-2506-1080

Melissa Slatter
Te Rūnanga o Waihao

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Melissa

Invitation to provide written comments on an application for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

An application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Contact Energy Limited (the applicant) for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. [Section 22](#) of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(d) of the Act (which requires consultation with relevant Māori groups identified under section 18(2)). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for consultation under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in confidence and should not be forwarded or comments sought from, anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **20 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

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If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of \$2,000 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025. For information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fasttrack webpage on [Cost recovery for agencies](#).

If the Minister decides to accept the application and to refer the project, the applicant will need to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then lodge their substantive application for the approvals needed for the project. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

Please upload your comments directly via the portal by completing the template for written comments provided in Attachment 1. Alternatively, you are welcome to upload your comments via the portal using your own format or document, if preferred.

Before the due date, if you have any queries about this letter, please email referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and refer to the name of the Application Lead – Ben Bunting. If you need assistance with the application portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'I' followed by a horizontal stroke that tapers to a point.

Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

cc waihao.manager@ngaitahu.iwi.nz

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2506-1080
Project name	Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply
Applicant name	Contact Energy Limited
Project summary details	Lake Hāwea (the Lake) is a large, glacial lake with a body measuring 5 kilometres wide and 20 kilometres long, located in the Otago Region approximately 17 kilometres north of Wānaka. The Lake forms part of the wider Clutha Hydro Scheme (CHS) which is owned and operated by the applicant. CHS is existing nationally significant infrastructure that provides 10% of New Zealand's electricity. The project seeks to use the Fast-track process to enable an adjustment of the applicant's generation capacity and an increase of the Lake's critical energy storage levels to manage dry year risks. The project also aims to provide a flexible source of hydroelectricity to back up intermittent generation like wind and solar, which depend on weather conditions. The applicant considers the project will help achieve New Zealand's decarbonisation goals quickly and increase the security of New Zealand's electricity supply. The applicant already holds resource consents to operate Lake Hāwea between 338–346 metres above sea level (masl), with contingent storage allowed down to 336 masl. The application seeks new consents to enable the normal minimum operating level of the Lake to be lowered to 336 masl, and for contingent storage to 333 masl during a 4% Electricity Risk Curve alert (ERC) and to 330 masl during an 8% ERC. The ERC is the alert level which indicates the risk level of an electricity supply shortage (or low contingent storage event) and can only be determined by the system operator, Transpower New Zealand. The project additionally seeks a change to current consent conditions, specifically, those conditions which specify the minimum allowable lake level and contingent storage. The applicant considers this necessary to implement the project by ensuring current consent conditions do not conflict with the proposed new consents. The applicant considers these variations to be largely administrative in nature to enable the project and intends to process these simultaneously with the new consents sought.

Sarah Gillies
Chief Executive Officer
Electricity Authority (Te Mana Hiko)
PO Box 10041
Wellington 6143

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear Sarah

Invitation to provide written comments on an application for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

An application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Contact Energy Limited (the applicant) for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. Project summary details are in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits. [Section 22](#) of the Act sets out the criteria that inform the Minister's decision-making process on referral applications.

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(5) of the Act. I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application.

The information you are receiving is being provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for consultation under section 17 of the Act. The information is being provided in confidence and should not be forwarded or discussed anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **20 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's considerations in making decisions on whether to accept the referral application. If a decision is made to refer the project, any comments received may assist in determining the information that must be submitted with the substantive application.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and to refer the project, the applicant will be required to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then be able to lodge their

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substantive application for the approvals they require. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

Please upload your comments directly via the portal by completing the template for written comments provided in Attachment 1. Alternatively, you are welcome to upload your comments via the portal using your own format or document, if preferred.

Before the due date, if you have any queries about this letter, please email referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and refer to the name of the Application Lead – Ben Bunting. If you need assistance with the application portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ilana Miller', with a stylized, flowing script.

Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

cc info@ea.govt.nz

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2506-1080
Project name	Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply
Applicant name	Contact Energy Limited
Project summary details	Lake Hāwea (the Lake) is a large, glacial lake with a body measuring 5 kilometres wide and 20 kilometres long, located in the Otago Region approximately 17 kilometres north of Wānaka. The Lake forms part of the wider Clutha Hydro Scheme (CHS) which is owned and operated by the applicant. CHS is existing nationally significant infrastructure that provides 10% of New Zealand’s electricity. The project seeks to use the Fast-track process to enable an adjustment of the applicant’s generation capacity and an increase of the Lake’s critical energy storage levels to manage dry year risks. The project also aims to provide a flexible source of hydroelectricity to back up intermittent generation like wind and solar, which depend on weather conditions. The applicant considers the project will help achieve New Zealand’s decarbonisation goals quickly and increase the security of New Zealand’s electricity supply. The applicant already holds resource consents to operate Lake Hāwea between 338–346 metres above sea level (masl), with contingent storage allowed down to 336 masl. The application seeks new consents to enable the normal minimum operating level of the Lake to be lowered to 336 masl, and for contingent storage to 333 masl during a 4% Electricity Risk Curve alert (ERC) and to 330 masl during an 8% ERC. The ERC is the alert level which indicates the risk level of an electricity supply shortage (or low contingent storage event) and can only be determined by the system operator, Transpower New Zealand. The project additionally seeks a change to current consent conditions, specifically, those conditions which specify the minimum allowable lake level and contingent storage. The applicant considers this necessary to implement the project by ensuring current consent conditions do not conflict with the proposed new consents. The applicant considers these variations to be largely administrative in nature to enable the project and intends to process these simultaneously with the new consents sought.

James Kilty
Chief Executive Officer
Transpower New Zealand Limited

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Dear James

Invitation to provide written comments on an application for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

An application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Contact Energy Limited (the applicant) for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. Project summary details are in Appendix A.

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Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'I' followed by a horizontal stroke that tapers to a point.

Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

cc s 9(2)(a)

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2506-1080
Project name	Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply
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FTAA-2506-1080

Odele Stehlin
Waihōpai Rūnaka

Email: s 9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe Odele

Invitation to provide written comments on an application for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

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If the Minister decides to accept the application and to refer the project, the applicant will need to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then lodge their substantive application for the approvals needed for the project. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

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Before the due date, if you have any queries about this letter, please email referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and refer to the name of the Application Lead – Ben Bunting. If you need assistance with the application portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'I' followed by a horizontal stroke that tapers to a point.

Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

cc info@waihopai.org.nz

Appendix A – Project summary details

Application number	FTAA-2506-1080
Project name	Clutha Hydro Scheme – Increasing Flexibility and Security of Electricity Supply
Applicant name	Contact Energy Limited
Project summary details	Lake Hāwea (the Lake) is a large, glacial lake with a body measuring 5 kilometres wide and 20 kilometres long, located in the Otago Region approximately 17 kilometres north of Wānaka. The Lake forms part of the wider Clutha Hydro Scheme (CHS) which is owned and operated by the applicant. CHS is existing nationally significant infrastructure that provides 10% of New Zealand’s electricity. The project seeks to use the Fast-track process to enable an adjustment of the applicant’s generation capacity and an increase of the Lake’s critical energy storage levels to manage dry year risks. The project also aims to provide a flexible source of hydroelectricity to back up intermittent generation like wind and solar, which depend on weather conditions. The applicant considers the project will help achieve New Zealand’s decarbonisation goals quickly and increase the security of New Zealand’s electricity supply. The applicant already holds resource consents to operate Lake Hāwea between 338–346 metres above sea level (masl), with contingent storage allowed down to 336 masl. The application seeks new consents to enable the normal minimum operating level of the Lake to be lowered to 336 masl, and for contingent storage to 333 masl during a 4% Electricity Risk Curve alert (ERC) and to 330 masl during an 8% ERC. The ERC is the alert level which indicates the risk level of an electricity supply shortage (or low contingent storage event) and can only be determined by the system operator, Transpower New Zealand. The project additionally seeks a change to current consent conditions, specifically, those conditions which specify the minimum allowable lake level and contingent storage. The applicant considers this necessary to implement the project by ensuring current consent conditions do not conflict with the proposed new consents. The applicant considers these variations to be largely administrative in nature to enable the project and intends to process these simultaneously with the new consents sought.

FTAA-2506-1080

Richard Saunders
Chief Executive
Otago Regional Council

s 9(2)(a)

Dear Richard

Invitation to provide written comments on an application for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

An application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Contact Energy Limited (the applicant) for referral of the Clutha Hydro Scheme project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. Project summary details are in Appendix A.

Under section 17(1) of the Act, the Minister invited comments on the application from the Minister for the Environment and other relevant portfolio Ministers, relevant administering agencies, relevant local authorities, and relevant Māori groups.

Through considering invited comments and further information requested, the Minister can gain a good understanding of the project to inform his decision-making guided by criteria set out in section 22 of the Act.

Considering comments received, under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 20 of the Act, I am writing to request the following further information from Otago Regional Council:

1. The application proposes new consents to enable the minimum level of Lake Hāwea to be lowered to 333 masl at 4% ERC and 330 masl at 8% ERC during low storage contingency events, to be used solely during emergency or crisis situations regarding electricity supply. Please confirm if accessing this additional contingent storage could occur under the

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current consent conditions (including powers available under section 330 of the Resource Management Act 1991).

If you wish to provide the information requested, you must respond within 10 working days of the date of this request by email to: referral@fasttrack.govt.nz. The Minister is not required to consider information provided outside this time frame.

Before the due date, please email any queries about this letter to referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the Application Lead – Helen Willis. For assistance with the application portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ilana Miller', with a stylized, flowing script.

Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

cc: s 9(2)(a) [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]