



12 December 2025

The Expert Panel – Fast-track Approvals Act application
Environmental Protection Authority
Waterloo Quay
Wellington

Substantive Fast-track Approvals Act application – Southland Wind Farm

To the Expert Panel

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the substantive application of Southland Wind Farm, under the Fast-track Approvals Act (FTAA).

I am providing comments in my capacity as Minister for Economic Growth under section 53(2)(J) of the FTAA. The comments below reflect the new information provided by the applicant, Contact Energy, for the substantive application of Southland Wind Farm.

Similar to the comments provided during the project's referral application, my comments focus on whether the substantive application of this project is likely to have significant economic benefits under section 22(2)(a)(iv) of the FTAA, based on the information provided.

Southland Wind Farm, FTAA-2508-1095

The Southland Wind Farm project is a proposal to construct and operate a 230 to 380 megawatt wind farm comprising 55 wind turbines in Slopedown Hill, Southland. It is anticipated to be the largest wind farm planned for New Zealand to date with the ability to generate renewable electricity for up to 150,000 homes. It is expected to inject approximately \$258–\$426 million into the national economy through construction expenditure.

According to the economic assessment report provided by Contact Energy for the project's substantive stage application, the project is expected to have direct and indirect/induced economic impacts on GDP and employment during its two-year construction phase through to when the wind farm is in operation.

During construction, direct GDP value-added is forecasted to be \$42.6–\$70.3 million per year, while estimated direct employment generated is 92 to 152 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs per year. Indirect/induced benefits are also estimated to be \$34.5–\$57 million GDP value-add per year, and 65 to 108 FTEs per year.

When operating, the wind farm is expected have a direct GDP value-add of \$2.9–\$4.8 million and generate 10 to 14 FTEs per year. Additional quantitative and qualitative economic benefits on GDP and employment were also estimated.

As noted in the comment provided during the application's referral stage and reaffirmed in the economic assessment report, the primary economic benefit of this project is increasing the supply of renewable electricity to meet growing demand. Increasing electricity supply could put downward pressure on prices, address security of supply concerns and future-proof changes in energy consumption, including supporting energy-intensive infrastructure. In doing so, this project could deliver essential infrastructure to support a growing economy.

Similar to previous comments noted during the referral stage of this application, since this project would increase renewable electricity generation, this application may be better assessed in terms of supporting climate change mitigation and reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions (under 22(2)(a)(vii) of the FTAA).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Willis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon Nicola Willis

Minister for Economic Growth