

Hon Chris Bishop



Minister of Housing
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Minister of Transport
Leader of the House
Associate Minister of Finance
Associate Minister for Sport and Recreation

FTAA-2505-1069

Vicki Morrison-Shaw
Fast-track Expert Panel Chair
substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz

Dear Vicki,

Thank you for the invitation to comment on Westpower Limited's Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA) substantive application, the Waitaha Hydro project (FTAA-2505-1069). I am responding in my capacity as Minister Responsible for RMA Reform and Minister for Infrastructure.

Infrastructure is important for growth and prosperity and renewable electricity generation is priority infrastructure. Our view is our planning system has not been enabling of growth, hence the establishment of the FTAA. I have attached my comments relating to the Waitaha Hydro project in Appendix 1.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my broad support for projects which deliver positive outcomes for New Zealand, including the Waitaha Hydro project. Please take this letter of support as a reflection of the Government's economic growth and infrastructure priorities.

Yours sincerely,



Hon Chris Bishop
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Minister for Infrastructure

Appendix 1 – Comments on the Waitaha Hydro project – FTAA-2505-1069

National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 & National Environmental Standards for Freshwater 2020

I am advised that Waitaha River has unique characteristics, and that the Expert Panel has appointed specialist technical advisors in fluvial geomorphology and intake hydraulics engineering/fish screening. It is likely that these specialists will assist the panel in ensuring appropriate conditions are set for the Waitaha Hydro project in relation to these specialist areas.

Ongoing monitoring and adaptive management will be required to ensure that the project's compliance with the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 and National Environmental Standards for Freshwater 2020.

Proposed National Policy Statement – Renewable Electricity Generation and Electricity Networks

The Waitaha Hydro project has both direct and indirect benefits associated with new hydroelectricity generation, namely in displacing greenhouse gas emissions and bolstering energy security.

With a planned generation capacity of 23MW, the project represents a relatively small amount of additional renewable electricity generation, providing enough energy for 12,000 households.

This project is consistent with the Government proposed National Policy Statements on Renewable Electricity Generation and Electricity Networks, namely their objective to promote more renewable electricity generation and its transmission to sources of demand. These instruments must be read alongside other applicable national direction.

Renewable electricity generation is priority infrastructure for this Government. Ministers are looking for quality projects to progress under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 to help meet the target to double renewable electricity generation by 2025.

To help signal this, in May 2025 the Government consulted on updating and improving the National Policy Statements for Renewable Electricity Generation and Electricity Networks, alongside 14 other instruments. These two national policy statements will be issued under the Resource Management Act 1991 in the first quarter of the new year, and they will need to be applied alongside other applicable national direction instruments, such as Freshwater.