

Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

MINUTE #2 OF THE EXPERT PANEL

Invitations to comment and appointment of technical advisors
The Point Solar Farm [FTAA-2508-1100]

21 January 2026

Invitation to Comment

[1] In accordance with section 53(2) of the Act, the Panel must invite comments on the substantive application from persons listed in sections 53(2) (a) to (n) of the Act. **Appendix 1** to this Minute provides the list of prescribed persons relevant to this project.

[2] When interpreting the meaning of “land adjacent” to the land to which the substantive application relates, for the purposes of section 53(2)(h) and (i), the Panel has had regard to the EPA guidance document relating to “identifying adjacent land” (May 2025 revision) and has exercised its judgment to include land that does not have a common boundary but is close enough to form part of the context of the application site and could be considered adjacent (such as land separated by a road, rail corridor, or watercourse). In deciding what is properly regarded as “adjacent” the Panel is mindful of the very open nature of the landscape. This has led it to adopt a wider approach to the concept of being “near” than would be the case in a more built-up or vegetated landscape.

[3] For these reasons, a conservative approach has been taken to what is adjacent. The properties identified as adjacent are shown highlighted in orange and purple on the plan attached in **Appendix 2**.

[4] Under section 53(3) of the Act, the Panel also has discretion to invite comments from any other person the Panel considers appropriate. In determining whether to exercise

its discretion to invite additional parties, the Panel took into account the list of mandatory invitees, the adjacent properties, as well as, the purpose, text and context of the Act. It took into account the fact that the Project would be located in an Outstanding Natural Landscape, and the Mackenzie Basin has unique ecological features, including the possible presence at times of the kakī or black stilt.

[5] Given the landscape and ecological issues that may arise, it seeks comment from the Department of Conservation, the Environmental Defence Society, and the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Incorporated. The Panel is satisfied that those parties will have relevant expert evidence that could be of considerable assistance in making a timely, efficient and cost effective decision.

[6] Lodestone Energy Limited occupies nearby land and has also lodged a substantive application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (Haldon Solar). As signalled in Minute #2 of the Expert Panel for the Haldon Solar [FTAA-2508-1097] Para [7], the Point Solar Panel invites comment from Lodestone Energy Limited on the potential or cumulative effects of one or two of the applications being granted. If there are cumulative effects, what are they and how should they be dealt with in the two separate applications? It also invites comment on the relevance, if any, of the sequence and timing of the applications, and whether those factors give rise to any particular considerations. Again, as identified in Minute #2 of the Expert Panel for the Haldon Solar [FTAA-2508-1097], the Panel does not see the applicants as participating in a competition, and will not be assisted by critiques by one applicant of the application of the other.

[7] Further, the Panel observes that legal and physical access to the site is from SH8 (Tekapo – Twizel Road) which is administered by the New Zealand Transport Agency – Waka Kotahi, and has included a property owned by [REDACTED] which is by the proposed physical access to site over which all material and construction personnel pass.

[8] As a result, the Panel has determined it is appropriate to invite comment from the following additional parties:

- (a) New Zealand Transport Agency – Waka Kotahi; and

- (b) Department of Conservation; and
- (c) Lodestone Energy Limited; and
- (d) [REDACTED]; and
- (e) Environmental Defence Society; and
- (f) Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Incorporated.

[9] Under section 54 of the Act, the invited parties have 20 working days to submit their comments, which, for this application, is no later than **19 February 2026**.

[10] Comments can be submitted to the EPA via the following methods:

- a) by email to substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz
- b) by post to Private Bag 63002, Wellington 6140 New Zealand; or
- c) in person to Stewart Dawson's Corner, 366 Lambton Quay, Wellington 6011.

Appointment of Technical Advisors

[11] The Panel has considered the complexity of the Point Solar Farm application. As provided for in clause 10(3) of Schedule 3 of the Act, the Panel may, at any time, appoint special advisors as it considers appropriate.

[12] Phil Page has been identified as an appropriate specialist to assist the panel in legal matters.



Hon Raynor Asher KC
The Point Solar Expert Panel Chair

Appendix 1

Parties invited to Comment under section 53(2) of the Act

Section of Act	Description from Act	Party identified
53(2)(a)	the relevant local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canterbury Regional Council • Mackenzie District Council
53(2)(b)	the relevant iwi authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu
53(2)(c)	<p>any relevant Treaty settlement entities, including, to avoid doubt,—</p> <p>(i) an entity that has an interest under a Treaty settlement within the area to which the substantive application relates; and</p> <p>(ii) an entity operating in a collective arrangement, provided for under a Treaty settlement, that relates to that area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, representing Ngāi Tahu • Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, Papatipu Rūnanga of Ngāi Tahu Whānui • Te Rūnanga o Waihao, Papatipu Rūnanga of Ngāi Tahu Whānui • Te Rūnanga o Moeraki, Papatipu Rūnanga of Ngāi Tahu Whānui
53(2)(d)	any protected customary rights groups and customary marine title groups whose protected customary rights area or customary marine title is within the area to which the substantive application relates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
53(2)(e)	any applicant group under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 that is identified in the report prepared under section 18 or 49 and seeks recognition of customary marine title or protected customary rights within the area to which the substantive application relates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
53(2)(f)	ngā hapū o Ngāti Porou if the area to which the substantive application relates is within or adjacent to, or the activities to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

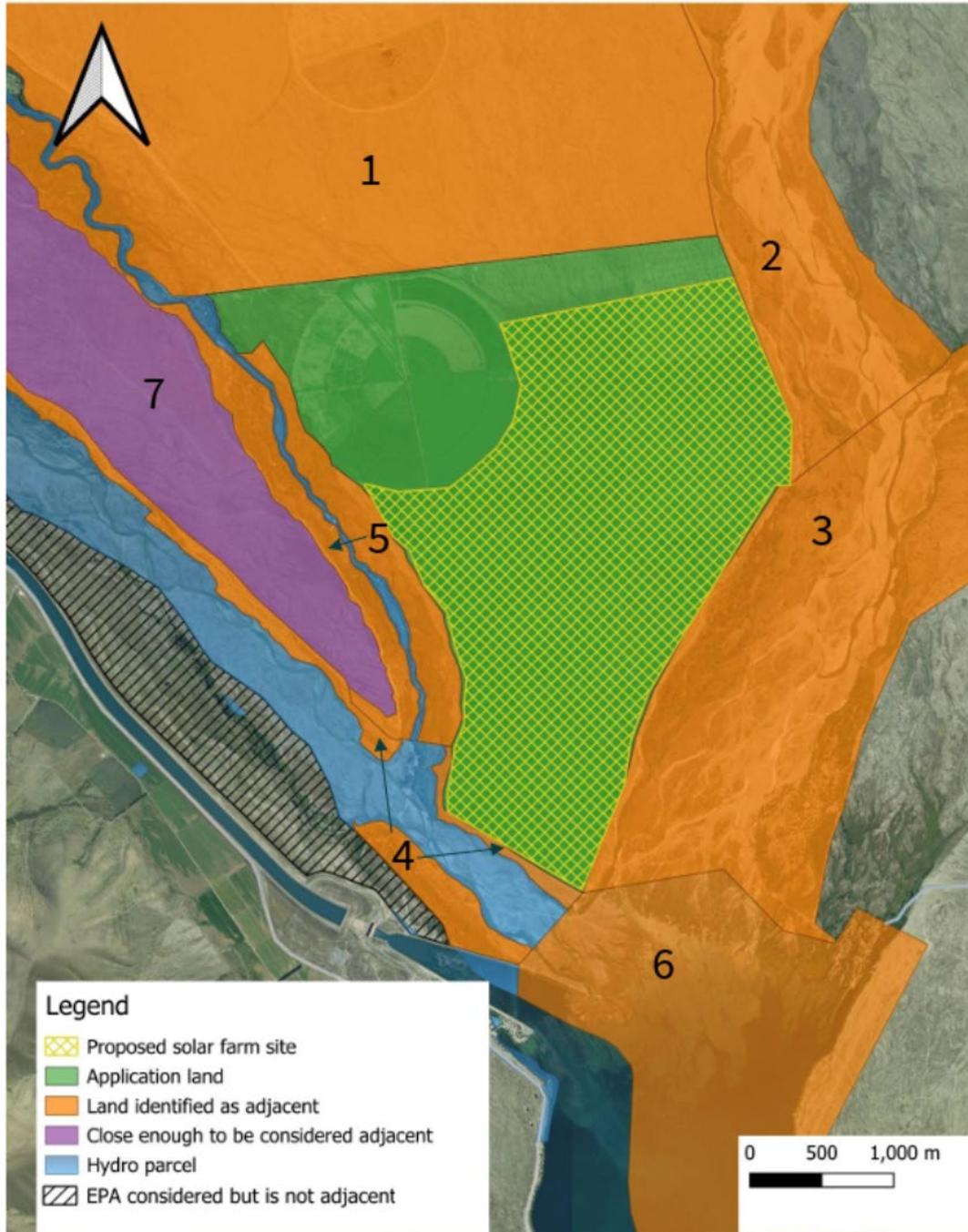
	which it relates would directly affect, ngā rohe moana o ngā hapū o Ngāti Porou	
53(2)(g)	the tangata whenua of any area within the area to which the substantive application relates that is a taiāpure-local fishery, a mātaimai reserve, or an area that is subject to bylaws or regulations made under Part 9 of the Fisheries Act 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
53(2)(h)	owners of the land to which the substantive application relates (Owners of land adjacent to that land is covered in Table 2 as the Expert Panel must exercise judgement on what is considered adjacent)	See Map 1 for land to which the substantive application relates. List of all owners set out in Appendix 1.
53(2)(i)	occupiers of the land to which the substantive application relates unless, after reasonable inquiry, an occupier cannot be identified (Occupiers of land adjacent to that land unless, after reasonable inquiry, an occupier cannot be identified is covered in Table 2 as the Expert Panel must exercise judgement on what is considered adjacent)	See Map 1 for land to which the substantive application relates. List of all occupiers set out in Appendix 1.
53(2)(j)	the Minister for the Environment and other relevant portfolio Ministers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry for the Environment • Minister for RMA Reform • Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations • Minister for Energy • Minister for Climate Change • Minister of Local Government • Minister for the South Island

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister for Regional Development • Minister for Rural Communities • Minister for Land Information • Minister for Hunting and Fishing • Minister for Sport and Recreation • Minister for Infrastructure • Minister for Resources • Minister of Conservation • Minister for Māori Development
53(2)(k)	relevant administering agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry for the Environment • Mackenzie District Council • Canterbury Regional Council
53(2)(l)	any requiring authority that has a designation on land to which the substantive application relates or on land adjacent to that land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
53(2)(m)	<p>if the approvals sought in the substantive application include—</p> <p>(i) an approval described in section 42(4)(a) or (d) (resource consent or designation), the persons and groups listed in clause 13 of Schedule 5:</p> <p>(ii) an approval described in section 42(4)(e) (concession), the persons listed in clause 5 of Schedule 6:</p> <p>(iii) an approval described in section 42(4)(g) (conservation covenant), the persons listed in clause 44 of Schedule 6:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director-General of Conservation • Ministry for the Environment

	(vi) an approval described in section 42(4)(l) or (m) (access arrangement), the persons listed in clause 5 of Schedule 11	
53(2)(n)	any persons or groups specified by the Minister under section 27(3)(b)(iii).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A

Appendix 2

Map 1: Land to which the substantive application relates and adjacent land for consideration



Map of adjacent land and those considered close enough to be adjacent – 53(2)(h) and (i).

Owners and occupiers of the properties to which the substantive application relates and the owners and occupiers of the land adjacent to the application site

Owners of the land to which the substantive application relates (green)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [REDACTED], and Waitaki Trustees Golden Acres Limited, Section 3 SO 384036
Owners of the adjacent land (orange)
<p>Land that has a common boundary with the land to which the substantive application relates and is considered adjacent (shown orange):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bendrose Farm 2014 Limited, Lot 2 DP 470213 2. Meridian Energy Limited, Section 1 SO 323263 3. Genesis Energy Limited, Section 1-2 SO 394353 4. Meridian Energy Limited (Grantee), Section 1 SO 372400 5. Department of Conservation, Section 4-5 SO 384036 6. Meridian Energy Limited (Grantee), Section 3 SO 494722
Owners of the adjacent land (purple)
<p>Land that does not have a common boundary but is close enough to form part of the context of the application site and could be considered adjacent (shown purple):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. NGL Farms Limited, Lot 3 DP 422901
Any other person the Expert Panel may consider appropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited • Aukaha • Transpower New Zealand Limited • LINZ • New Zealand Transport Agency – Waka Kotahi • [REDACTED] – Lot 1 DP 470213 and Section 3 SO 432605 • Environmental Defence Society • Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand Incorporated • Lodestone Limited