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

To the Expert Panel

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the substantive applications of Mahinerangi Wind Farm (FTAA-2512-1155) and Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project (FTAA-2507-1089) under section 53(2)(J) of the Fast-track Approvals Act (FTAA). My comments focus on whether these applications are likely to have economic benefits, based on the information provided.

Mahinerangi Wind Farm, FTAA-2512-1155

This proposal is to vary the consents Tararua Wind Power Limited (TWP) currently have for the Stage 2 construction and operation of Mahinerangi Wind Farm. The project site is around 1,723 hectares in Lammermoor Range, Central Otago.

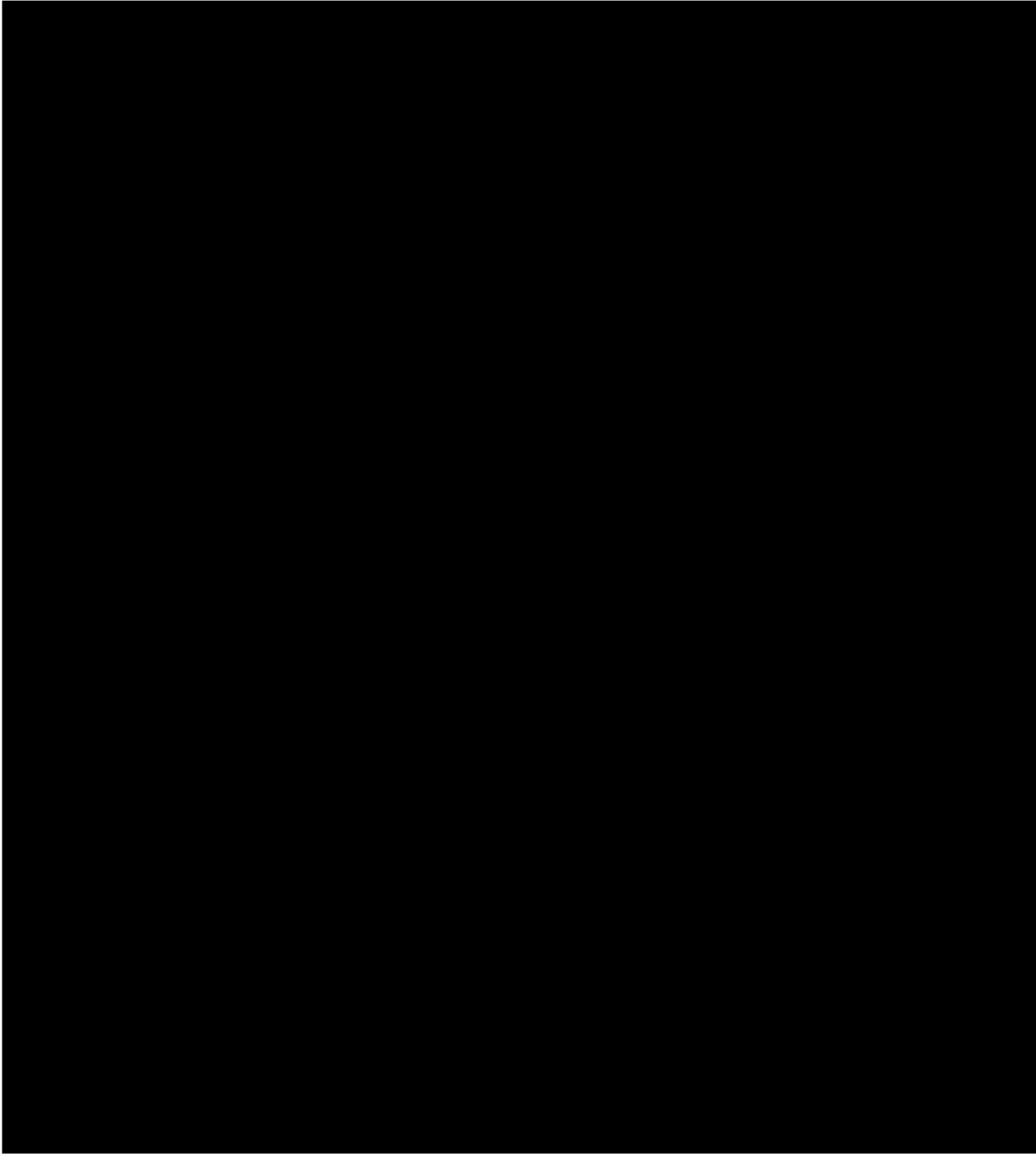
The changes include reducing the number of wind turbines from 100 to 44, increasing maximum wind turbine blade height by 20 metres from 145m to 165m and removing the condition limiting the installed electricity generation capacity of the wind farm to 200 megawatts. The application includes additional consents for the construction of a new substation and transmission line to the National Grid, a new Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and a new operations and maintenance facility for the wind farm.

Based on the economic impact assessment report provided by TWP, the project is estimated to inject around \$220 million in direct expenditure into the New Zealand economy during its construction and development phase. An additional \$22.5 million of expenditure is estimated for the BESS component of the development. An average of 75 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs will be generated during this period.

When operational, the applicant estimates \$14 million of operational expenditure per year, with around 8 to 10 FTEs annually. Positive indirect and induced economic impacts were also estimated for employment and GDP during the construction and operational stages.

Overall, the economic benefits to the local and regional economy are concentrated during the three-year construction period of the wind farm with more modest ongoing economic benefits when operational. Broadly, the primary benefit of this project is its contribution to increased renewable energy generation and overall electricity supply through an estimated annual electricity output of 549 gigawatt-hour (GWh) of electricity, enough to power approximately 60,000 homes. This additional supply is expected to support future growth in electricity demand and improve energy security which is essential in a growing economy.

Since the project enables the use of renewable electricity, it could prevent greenhouse gas emissions. Given this, the project may also be evaluated under supporting climate change mitigation and reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions (under s22(2)(a)(vii) of the Fast-track Application Act).



Yours sincerely

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Minister for Economic Growth