

File ref: 26-BRF-00839 / FTAA-2511-1144

5 May 2026

c/- The agent:
Gascoigne Wicks Limited
Attn: Emma Deason
Email: s 9(2)(a)

The applicants:

Apex Marine Farm Limited (Attn: Bruce Hearn / Nick Hearn – s 9(2)(a)

s 9(2)(a)

Clearwater Mussels Limited (Attn: John Young – s 9(2)(a)

Marine Farming Association Incorporated (Attn: Ned Wells – s 9(2)(a)

P H Redwood & Co Limited (Attn: Chris Redwood / Patrick Redwood – s 9(2)(a)

s 9(2)(a)

Talley's Limited (Attn: Chris Whitty – s 9(2)(a)

Dear Emma Deason

Section 28 – Notice of Decisions on the referral application for the Marlborough Sounds Aquaculture project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

This notice of decisions is for a referral application received from Apex Marine Farm Limited, Clearwater Mussels Limited, Marine Farming Association Incorporated, P H Redwood & Co Limited, and Talley's Limited (the applicants) for the Marlborough Sounds Aquaculture project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act).

Project details

The project is to establish and operate separate marine farms in six different locations in the coastal marine area of the Marlborough Sounds, totalling an area of approximately 280.65 hectares. Table 1 of this letter provides an overview of the project details. Locality maps are provided in Appendix 2 of this letter.

The applicants seek the following approvals under the fast-track approvals process to authorise the project:

- a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) as described in section 42(4)(a) of the Act, specifically coastal permits, each being a prohibited activity.

The applicants also intend to seek aquaculture decisions for each coastal permit under section 80 of the Act at the substantive application stage.

Table 1: Overview of project details

Location	Activity	Area	Applicant
Pig Bay (Outer Marlborough Sounds)	Greenshell mussel spat and seed nursery farm	~90 hectares	Marine Farming Association Incorporated
Guards Bay (Outer Marlborough Sounds)	Greenshell mussel spat and seed nursery farm	~76.8 hectares	P H Redwood & Co Limited
Hapuku Rock (Outer Marlborough Sounds)	Greenshell mussel spat and seed nursery farm for the purposes of marine farming with two blocks	~28.03 hectares	Clearwater Mussels Limited
Okuri Bay (Outer Marlborough Sounds)	New marine farm with two blocks	~27.89 hectares	Clearwater Mussels Limited; Talley's Limited
Richmond Bay (Outer Pelorus Sound / Te Hoiere)	New marine farm with three blocks	~42.2 hectares	Apex Marine Farm Limited; Clearwater Mussels Limited; Talley's Limited; Marine Farming Association Incorporated; P H Redwood & Co Limited
Onapua Bay (Queen Charlotte Sound)	New marine farm with three blocks (includes oyster farming)	~15.73 hectares	Apex Marine Farm Limited

Statutory framework for referral applications

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

The project can only be accepted if the Minister is satisfied the criteria in section 22 are met, which includes being satisfied the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits and referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost effective way than under normal processes, and is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

Under section 21(3) of the Act, the Minister must decline a referral application if:

- the Minister is satisfied that the project does not meet the criteria in section 22
- the Minister is satisfied that the project involves an ineligible activity
- the Minister considers they do not have adequate information to inform the decision.

Additionally, the Minister has the discretion to decline a referral application for any other reason, even if the project meets the criteria outlined in section 22 of the Act.

Decision on referral application

The Minister has decided to accept the referral application under section 21(1)(c) and refer the whole project to the fast-track approvals process under section 26(2)(a). The Minister is satisfied that the project meets the criteria in section 22 of the Act, for the reasons detailed below.

Reasons for accepting referral application

The Minister is satisfied the project:

- a. is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits; and
- b. referring the project to the fast-track approvals process –
 - i. would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes; and
 - ii. is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

Specifically, the Minister is satisfied the project meets the criteria in section 22 of the Act because:

- a. the project is a **development project** that would have **significant regional and national benefits** [s22(1)(a)] because it:
 - i. will deliver significant economic benefits [s22(2)(a)(iv)] as the project is estimated to support between 24,713 and 98,438 greenweight tonnes of aquaculture production annually in Marlborough, generating indicative export revenue of \$76–\$579 million and supporting between 126 and 954 full-time equivalent jobs in the Marlborough Sounds and surrounding communities, with additional economic benefits arising from the flat oyster farming component
 - ii. will support primary industries, including aquaculture [s22(2)(a)(v)] as the project will support the aquaculture industry in the Marlborough Region and wider New Zealand through its alignment with the New Zealand Aquaculture Development Plan 2025–2030, in particular by contributing to improved mussel spat supply and survival
- b. referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes [s22(1)(b)(i)] because:
 - i. the project involves a prohibited activity under the relevant regional plans, which would preclude it from progressing through the standard RMA processes without a private plan change, which could be costly and time-consuming – prohibited activities may be considered through the fast-track approvals process
 - ii. appeals under the Act are only to the High Court and are limited to points of law
 - iii. the Act precludes public and limited notification
- c. referring the project to the fast-track approvals process is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process [s22(1)(b)(ii)] because although the project may involve some complexities, the six applications all relate to aquaculture activities of a similar nature with broadly similar anticipated adverse effects.

The Minister is satisfied there is no reason they must decline the project under section 21(3) of the Act. The Minister is also satisfied there is no reason to decline the project under section 21(4) of the Act.

Specified matters for accepted referral application

1. Apex Marine Farm Limited, Clearwater Mussels Limited, Marine Farming Association Incorporated, P H Redwood & Co Limited, and Talley's Limited, who lodged the referral application, as the persons who are authorised to lodge a substantive application for the project under section 27(2) of the Act.
2. Under section 27(3)(b)(i) of the Act, a deadline of two years from the date of issue of this letter applies for lodging the substantive application.
3. Pursuant to section 27(3)(b)(ii) of the Act, the following information must be submitted with substantive application: an assessment of the biosecurity risks of the proposed project for the spread of marine pests and diseases, along with a corresponding biosecurity management plan.
4. In relation to a substantive application for the project, pursuant to section 27(3)(b)(iii) of the Act, the panel must invite comments from the following groups, in addition to those specified under section 53:
 - a. Department of Conservation
 - b. Fisheries New Zealand (within the Ministry for Primary Industries)
 - c. Biosecurity New Zealand (within the Ministry for Primary Industries)
 - d. Aquaculture New Zealand
 - e. Maritime New Zealand.

Other matters

Under section 28 of the Act, the Ministry for the Environment must also give written notice of decisions made by the Minister on an accepted referral application to the parties specified in Appendix 1 of this letter.

If you have any queries about this notice of decisions, please email referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Ashiley Sycamore. If you have any queries about the substantive process, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz, or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 225 537).

Yours sincerely



Stephanie Frame

Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix 1: Section 28 – Notice of Minister's decision on accepted referral application

Appendix 2: Locality maps for each proposed aquaculture site

Appendix 1: Section 28 – Notice of Minister’s decision on accepted referral application

Section 28(1)(a) – The applicants	Apex Marine Farm Limited, Clearwater Mussels Limited, Marine Farming Association Incorporated, P H Redwood & Co Limited, and Talley’s Limited
Section 28(1)(ii) – Anyone invited to comment on the application	
<i>Relevant local authorities</i>	Marlborough District Council
<i>Relevant portfolio Ministers</i>	Minister for the Environment Minister of Conservation Minister for Oceans and Fisheries
<i>Relevant administering agencies</i>	N/A
<i>The Māori groups under s17(d)</i>	Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Inc Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Māui Trust Ngāti Apa ki Te Rā Tō Charitable Trust Ngāti Apa ki Te Rā Tō Post-Settlement Trust Rangitāne o Wairau Settlement Trust Te Rūnanga a Rangitāne o Wairau Trust Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Kuia Trust Ngāti Rārua Settlement Trust Ngāti Rārua Iwi Trust Te Pātaka a Ngāti Kōata Ngāti Kōata Trust Ngāti Tama ki Te Waipounamu Trust Te Ohu Kaimoana MAC-01-12-018: Te Ātiawa o Te Waka a Maui Trust (Whakatu/Te Hoiere) CIV-2017-485-251/MAC-01-12-010: Te Rūnanga a Rangitāne o Wairau CIV-2017-485-218: Ngāti Kōata Trust CIV-2017-485-365/MAC-01-12-017: Te Ātiawa o Te Waka a Māui CIV-2017-485-167: Te Rūnanga o Rangitāne o Kaituna Inc MAC-01-12-006: Ngāti Apa ki te Ra To MAC-01-12-021: Ngāti Toa Rangatira MAC-01-12-007: Ngāti Kōata Trust (Area 1) MAC-01-12-007: Ngāti Kōata Trust (Area 2) MAC-01-12-020: Te Runanga o Ngāti Kuia Trust MAC-01-12-012/CIV-2017-485-172: Tahuāroa Watson Whānau (Onauku Bay) Wakatū Incorporation
<i>Any other persons under s17(5)</i>	Director-General of Conservation (within the Department of Conservation) Deputy Director-General of Fisheries New Zealand (within the Ministry for Primary Industries) Deputy Director-General of Biosecurity New Zealand (within the Ministry for Primary Industries) Chief Executive of Aquaculture New Zealand Chief Executive of Maritime New Zealand Minister for Regional Development Minister for Economic Growth

Section 28(2) – Other parties for an accepted referral application

<i>The Panel Convener</i>	Including all the information received by the Minister as required by section 28(4).
<i>Any iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities (other than those that must be notified as identified above) that the Minister considers have an interest in the matter</i>	No additional iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities have been identified beyond those listed above.
<i>Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)</i>	Including all the information received by the Minister as required by section 28(4).
<i>If a proposed approval would require an aquaculture decision under section 80, the relevant chief executive</i>	The Director-General of Ministry for Primary Industries as the relevant chief executive.
<i>Relevant administering agencies</i>	N/A

Appendix 2: Locality maps for each proposed aquaculture site











