

From: [Infrastructure Portfolio](#)
To: [Simon Watts \(MIN\)](#); [Penny Simmonds \(MIN\)](#)
Cc: [FTAreferalls](#); [RMAReform.portfolio](#)
Subject: Invitation to comment on fast-track referral application for Grampians Solar Farm under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 – FTI004
Date: Monday, 10 March 2025 4:38:27 pm
Attachments: [Template - Comments Form for Invited parties.docx](#)

To:
Minister for Energy
Minister for Climate Change
Minister for the Environment

Dear Ministers,

Hon Chris Bishop, the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) has asked for me to write to you on his behalf.

The Minister has received an application from Helios CAN Op LP for referral for the Grampians Solar Farm under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track process (application reference FTAA-2502-1011).

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

Invitation to comment on referral application

I write in accordance with section 17 of the Act to invite you to provide written comments on the referral application. I have provided summary details of the project below.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received by **return email** within **20 working days** of receipt of this email. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Any comments submitted will contribute to the Minister's decision on whether to accept the referral application and to refer the project.

If you do not wish to provide comments, please let us know as soon as possible so we can proceed with processing the application without delay.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and to refer the project, the Applicant will need to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then lodge their substantive application for the approvals needed for the project. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

Process

The application documents are accessible through the Fast-Track portal. If you haven't used the portal before, you can request access by emailing ftareferalls@mfe.govt.nz. Once you are registered and have accepted the terms and conditions, you will receive a link to view the documents. Existing users will be able to see application documents via the request when logging into the portal.

To submit your comments on the application, you can either provide a letter or complete the attached template for written comments and return it by replying to this email.

Before the due date, if you have any queries about this email or need assistance with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz. Further information is available at <https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/>.

Project summary

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Project name | Grampians Solar Farm |
| Application ref | FTAA-2502-1011 |
| Applicant | Helios CAN Op LP |
| Project description | <p>The project is to establish and operate a 300 mega-watt solar farm with co-located energy storage, located on 574 hectares of pastoral land in the south-eastern corner of the Mackenzie Basin, 21 km south-east of Tekapo in the Canterbury Region.</p> <p>The project comprises:</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Approximately 500,000 photovoltaic panels, panel mounting structures, and steel piles.b. Associated components including inverters, transformers and electrical cabling to connect the solar panel arrays to the substation.c. An operations and maintenance building, 1-2 spare parts containers, new and upgraded access tracks, parking and storage yard, water tanks, fencing, and a security system.d. Energy storage facilities providing approximately 100MWh of storage capacitye. A 220kV substation connecting the facility to the National Grid.f. New and infill planting along existing shelterbelts, boundaries and native species enhancement of gullies and intermittent waterways. |
|--|---|

Yours sincerely

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for Infrastructure



Office of Hon Chris Bishop

Minister of Housing, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform,
Minister for Sport & Recreation, Leader of the House, Associate Minister of Finance

Email: christopher.bishop@parliament.govt.nz Website: www.beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

Caroline Ovenstone
Chief Executive Officer
Alpine Energy Limited

mailbox@alpineenergy.co.nz

Dear Caroline Ovenstone

Invitation to provide written comments on application for referral of the Grampians Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

An application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Helios CAN Op LP for referral of the Grampians Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. Project summary details are in Appendix A.

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

Under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(5) of the Act, I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application including the following matters:

1. Whether the applicant requires approvals from you to connect to the local electricity grid
2. Whether you consider there are any barriers to the applicant delivering the project

The information you are receiving is being provided to you in-confidence consistent with statutory requirements for consultation in section 17 of the Act. It should not be forwarded to or comments sought from anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within 20 working days of receipt of this letter. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside this time frame. Comments received within the time frame will inform the Minister's consideration in making a decision on whether to accept the referral application and refer the project.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project, the Applicant will need to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then lodge their substantive

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application for the approvals needed for the project. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

To assist you with the process, project summary details are in Appendix A. First time users of the Fast-track 'one stop shop' applications portal can seek an invitation by emailing ftareferrals@mfe.govt.nz. Once users are registered and have accepted the Terms & Conditions, they will receive a link to the application documents. You may provide comments directly via the portal, alternatively a template for written comments is in Attachment 1.

If you have any queries about this letter, please email referrals@fasttrack.govt.nz before the due date, which is unable to be extended. Alternatively, contact fast-track support on 0800 327 875.

Yours sincerely



Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details
Attachment 1: Template for written comments

Appendix A – Project summary details

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James Kilty
Chief Executive Officer
Transpower Limited

customer.solutions@transpower.co.nz

Dear James Kilty

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Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ilana Miller', with a stylized, flowing script.

Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details
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LEGALLY PRIVILEGED

Ross Wells
Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited

Email: info@aecltd.co.nz

Tēnā koe Justin Tipa

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Nāku noa, nā



Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details
Attachment 1: Template for written comments

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Trevor McGlinchey
Aukaha

Email: consents@aukaha.co.nz

Tēnā koe Trevor McGlinchey

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Nāku noa, nā



Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details
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Fiona Pimm
Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua

Email: arowhenua.admin@ngaitahu.iwi.nz

Tēnā koe Fiona Pimm

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Nāku noa, nā



Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

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Justin Tipa
Te Rūnanga o Moeraki

Email: moeraki.runanga@ngaitahu.iwi.nz

Tēnā koe Justin Tipa

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Cc: s 9(2)(a)

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| Project summary details | <p>The project is to establish and operate a 300MWac solar farm with co-located energy storage, located on 574 hectares of pastoral land in the south-eastern corner of the Mackenzie Basin, 21 km south-east of Tekapo.</p> <p>The project comprises:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Approximately 500,000 photovoltaic panels, panel mounting structures, and steel piles.Associated components including inverters, transformers and electrical cabling to connect the solar panel arrays to the substation.An operations and maintenance building, 1-2 spare parts containers, new and upgraded access tracks, parking and storage yard, water tanks, fencing, and a security system.Energy storage facilities providing approximately 100MWh of storage capacityA 220kV substation connecting the facility to the National Grid.New and infill planting along existing shelterbelts, boundaries and native species enhancement of gullies and intermittent waterways. |

Jo McLean
Te Rūnanga o Waihao

Email: waihao.manager@ngaitahu.iwi.nz

Tēnā koe Jo McLean

Invitation to provide written comments on application for referral of the Grampians Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

An application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Helios CAN Op LP for referral of the Grampians Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. Project summary details are in Appendix A.

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

I write under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(d) of the Act (which requires consultation with relevant Māori groups identified under section 18(2)). I invite you to provide written comments on the referral application.

The information you are receiving is provided to you consistent with the statutory requirements for consultation under section 17 of the Act. The information is provided in-confidence and should not be forwarded to or comments sought from anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within **20 working days** of receipt of this letter and copy of the application. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside of this time frame. Comments received will help inform the Minister's decisions on whether to accept the referral application and to refer the project.

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If you provide written comments as a **Māori consultation group**, you may be entitled to a financial contribution of \$1,500 (excluding GST) under Schedule 2 of the Fast-Track Approvals (Cost Recovery) Regulations 2025. For information about contribution fees and invoices refer to the Fasttrack webpage on [Cost recovery for agencies](#).

If the Minister decides to accept the application and to refer the project, the Applicant will need to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then lodge their substantive application for the approvals needed for the project. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

To assist you with the process, project summary details are in Appendix A. First time users of the Fast-track 'one stop shop' applications portal can seek an invitation by emailing ftareferrals@mfe.govt.nz. Once users are registered and have accepted the Terms & Conditions, they will receive a link to the application documents. You may provide comments directly via the portal, alternatively a template for written comments is in Attachment 1.

Before the due date, if you have any queries about this letter or need assistance with using the portal, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 327 875).

Nāku noa, nā



Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details

Attachment 1: Template for written comments

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Appendix A – Project summary details

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Project name | Grampians Solar Farm |
| Applicant name | Helios CAN Op LP |
| Project summary details | <p>The project is to establish and operate a 300MWac solar farm with co-located energy storage, located on 574 hectares of pastoral land in the south-eastern corner of the Mackenzie Basin, 21 km south-east of Tekapo.</p> <p>The project comprises:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Approximately 500,000 photovoltaic panels, panel mounting structures, and steel piles.Associated components including inverters, transformers and electrical cabling to connect the solar panel arrays to the substation.An operations and maintenance building, 1-2 spare parts containers, new and upgraded access tracks, parking and storage yard, water tanks, fencing, and a security system.Energy storage facilities providing approximately 100MWh of storage capacityA 220kV substation connecting the facility to the National Grid.New and infill planting along existing shelterbelts, boundaries and native species enhancement of gullies and intermittent waterways. |

Stefanie Rixecker
Chief Executive Officer
Canterbury Regional Council

s 9(2)(a)

Dear Stefanie Rixecker

Invitation to provide written comments on application for referral of the Grampians Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

An application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Helios CAN Op LP for referral of the Grampians Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. Project summary details are in Appendix A.

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

Under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(1)(a) of the Act, I invite Waikato Regional Council to provide written comments on the referral application. Under section 17(3) of the Act and without limiting any general comments under subsection 1 Canterbury Regional Council must provide comments advising on the following matters:

1. any applications that have been lodged with the Council that would be a competing application or applications if a substantive application for the project were lodged. If no such applications exist, please also confirm this in writing.
2. in relation to projects seeking approval of a resource consent under section 42(4)(a) of the Act, whether there any existing resource consents issued where sections 124C(1)(c) or 165ZI of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) could apply, if the project were to be applied for as a resource consent under the RMA. If no such consents exist, please also confirm this in writing.

I also invite you under section 20 to provide further information on whether you consider the project and its benefits to be regionally significant and whether it is consistent with the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement.

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Council is also invited to address in its comments any information it holds related to the following matters:

3. are there any reasons it would be more appropriate for the project to proceed through existing RMA processes rather than the processes under the Act?
4. does the applicant or a company owned by the applicant, have any environmental regulatory compliance history in your council's area?
5. does the project, from council's perspective, involve any activity classified as a prohibited activity under the RMA?
6. would the project have any significant adverse effects on the environment?

The information you are receiving is being provided to you in-confidence consistent with statutory requirements for consultation under section 17 of the Act. It should not be forwarded to or comments sought from anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within 20 working days of receipt of this letter with the copy of the application. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's decision on whether to accept the referral application and refer the project.

If the Minister decides to accept the application and refer the project, the applicant will need to complete any preliminary steps required under the Act and then lodge their substantive application for the approvals needed for the project. An expert panel will be appointed to decide the substantive application.

To assist you with the process, project summary details are in Appendix A. First time users of the Fast-track 'one stop shop' applications portal can seek an invitation by emailing ftareferrals@mfe.govt.nz. Once users are registered and have accepted the Terms & Conditions, they will receive a link to the application documents. You may provide comments directly via the portal, alternatively a template for written comments is in Attachment 1.

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If you have any queries about this letter, please email referrals@fasttrack.govt.nz before the due date. Alternatively, contact fast-track support on 0800 327 875.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'I' followed by a horizontal stroke that tapers to a point.

Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details
Attachment 1: Template for written comments

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Appendix A – Project summary details

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| Project name | Grampians Solar Farm |
| Applicant name | Helios CAN Op LP |
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Angela Oosthuizen
Chief Executive Officer
Mackenzie District Council

s 9(2)(a)

Dear Angela Oosthuizen

Invitation to provide written comments on application for referral of the Grampians Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

An application has been received by the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) from Helios CAN Op LP for referral of the Grampians Solar Farm project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act) to the fast-track approvals process. Project summary details are in Appendix A.

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

Under delegation from the Minister and in accordance with section 17(1)(a) of the Act, I invite Mackenzie District Council to provide written comments on the referral application. Under section 17(3) of the Act and without limiting any general comments under subsection 1 Mackenzie District Council must provide comments advising on the following matters:

1. any applications that have been lodged with the Council that would be a competing application or applications if a substantive application for the project were lodged. If no such applications exist, please also confirm this in writing.
2. in relation to projects seeking approval of a resource consent under section 42(4)(a) of the Act, whether there any existing resource consents issued where sections 124C(1)(c) or 165ZI of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) could apply, if the project were to be applied for as a resource consent under the RMA. If no such consents exist, please also confirm this in writing.

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I also invite you under section 20 to provide further information on whether you consider the project and its benefits to be regionally significant and whether it is consistent with Council's land use policies and strategies.

Council is also invited to address in its comments any information it holds related to the following matters:

3. are there any reasons it would be more appropriate for the project to proceed through existing RMA processes rather than the processes under the Act?
4. does the applicant or a company owned by the applicant, have any environmental regulatory compliance history in your council's area?
5. does the project, from council's perspective, involve any activity classified as a prohibited activity under the RMA?
6. would the project have any significant adverse effects on the environment?

The information you are receiving is being provided to you in-confidence consistent with statutory requirements for consultation under section 17 of the Act. It should not be forwarded to or comments sought from anyone outside of your organisation.

If you wish to provide written comments, these must be received within 20 working days of receipt of this letter with the copy of the application. The Minister is not required to consider information received outside this time frame. Comments received will inform the Minister's decision on whether to accept the referral application and refer the project.

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To assist you with the process, project summary details are in Appendix A. First time users of the Fast-track 'one stop shop' applications portal can seek an invitation by emailing ftareferrals@mfe.govt.nz. Once users are registered and have accepted the Terms & Conditions, they will receive a link to the application documents. You may provide comments directly via the portal, alternatively a template for written comments is in Attachment 1.

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Yours sincerely

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Ilana Miller
General Manager, Delivery and Operations

Appendix A: Project summary details
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