

Hello,

I am writing because I have been invited to comment on the draft conditions of the resource consent for the Southland wind farm fast-track application by Contact Energy Ltd.

I am submitting further comments in a desperate final attempt to highlight the concerns that I continue to have on not only a personal level, but also on behalf of the many community members that would have very much appreciated being able to have their say; yet have been prevented from doing-so throughout this entire process; both in the previous fasttrack consenting process and now the newly formed (current) fasttrack consenting process.

However, due to sheer exhaustion, a particularly busy work and family-life schedule and a budget whose size is incomparable to that of the corporate juggernaut that is Contact Energy Limited; we as individuals (which includes an overwhelming majority of the community that strongly object to this project going ahead) cannot be justly expected to continue generating the energy, time or resources that are required to stand against this project. It is just not fair.

Because of this, I will not be taking the time to highlight every single shortcoming that I believe can be found within this application and the corresponding resource consent draft conditions (of which I believe there are many). The submission provided by the West Catlins Preservation Society details many of these. I quite simply oppose the idea of the entire project going-ahead – as do pretty-well our entire district. The thought of this project going ahead is utterly incomprehensible, particularly when it is considered that this very project has already been declined (within the last 12 months) by a panel selected under the previous fasttrack consenting process. What gives this project the right to be given the green-light this time around?

Contact Energy Limited have used any ‘responses’ to comments previously submitted to rebuff any concerns shared by community members and not necessarily ADDRESS them, let alone make an extended effort to resolve any continued concerns.

Whilst it has been relatively simple for the applicant to use science, research and the data that they have been able to formulate (via professionals with which they have employed an/or engaged-with) to respond to the more objective concerns/topics of discussion (of which there are many) and may include subjects relating to; regional and national electricity demand, the economics of such a project and even (arguably) the acoustic effects of the wind turbines associated with such a project; this has not necessarily been the case with some of the more subjective comments/topics of concern.

Throughout the previous fasttrack resource consent application process and now even more-so throughout the current fasttrack resource consent application process, much dissatisfaction has been voiced by the community regarding the way in which community consultation was conducted and carried-out by Contact Energy Limited. I know that I also touched-on this myself in my (two) previously submitted invitations to comment some time ago. In response to these concerns, Contact Energy Limited has simply stated that it believes that sufficient community consultation WAS performed (in their mind at least). How can this be a valid response if the very people that they were required to consult-with remain extremely dissatisfied with the sheer lack of consultation we received and the manner in-which it was carried-out? What then is the point in us (as the community members who will have to live alongside these megastructures) even being invited to place a comment?

I could go-on, with further examples including (but not limited-to) how impacted community members feel that these structures and our stunning natural landscape will appear from an aesthetic point-of-view (irrespective how Contact Energy are TELLING US we should feel when looking at them) and of course what impact this project stands to REALLY have from an environmental perspective; a particularly subjective topic, irrespective of the amount of research and number of studies that have been thrown at this application in an attempt to prove otherwise...

This response typifies Contact Energy Limited's sub-conscious attitude towards the community and its many members that oppose this project. I think that this is extremely concerning given that we stand to have this company in-charge of operating this wind farm, should it be ever (perish the thought) be approved...

Let's also not forget that Contact Energy Limited (as the applicant) had the luxury of simply suspending the processing of this application (certainly in the initial application process at least) while they formulated a response to our comments. Those invited to comment have never been afforded such luxuries, with tight non-negotiable deadlines for the submission of any comments being the only surety.

Similarly, I also share concerns about the number of times Contact Energy Limited were requested to submit additional information and/or add missing details to their initial application under the previous fasttrack application process. I lost count regarding the number of times this was required and it made it all-the-more time consuming and exhausting for all relevant parties to stay in-touch with the details and progress of the application. Was Contact Energy Limited's initial application really that far-off the mark? Should this flippant and inattentive attitude that Contact Energy Limited has demonstrated regarding the details of a resource consent for such a significant project located right on our front doorstep not be of great concern? I also see this as a particularly bad omen for things to-come and the management of such a project, should this application be given approval. Whilst I know that that this may not have

necessarily been the case this time around (under the current fasttrack application process); these two applications are almost identical; and so it can be guaranteed that much of the current application was a case of 'copy and paste' from the previous fasttrack consent process application that was eventually submitted.

It is particularly unfortunate that this pending decision coincides with the 'energy crisis' that our media (and the large energy companies such as Contact Energy Limited driving these headlines) would have us believe we are currently experiencing. After all, it did not seem to prevent major energy providers (including Contact Energy Limited) from brokering a deal with Rio Tinto as recently as May 2024 (well after this project had been proposed) that is affordable-enough to guarantee that they will continue to operate at their site at Tiwai Point for the next 20 years...

Whilst we have no-doubt experienced a recent rise in the cost of our energy and our demand will no-doubt continue to increase; what is so wrong with a market that drives change in the way that we produce energy throughout the country at a local level? There is so much more potential for smaller private generation systems; such as solar panels on the roofs of our homes and buildings, geothermal heating methods, smaller (particularly less intrusive) wind generation systems and even miniature hydroelectric systems (where water flows and slopes allow, examples of these can be seen in a number of irrigation channels in Canterbury).

The potential for these systems to exist in rural areas is even greater, where the areas covered are usually vaster (increasing the cost of electrical distribution systems) and the required resources are usually more plentiful and accessible. Furthermore, these alternatives reduce the demand on our electrical distribution network as this infrastructure is an unnecessary cost to the people in our communities should it be able to be reduced or minimized. What is the harm in having more electricity being produced locally (where it is ACTUALLY REQUIRED) and a reduction in the need (or at least rate-of-growth) of our energy distribution network? I believe that as a country, we are missing a trick here. There is vast potential here; demand and economics will drive change in this space when it becomes necessary. The fact that we are in the midst of an energy crisis in this country is a myth.

I do hope that this factor alone is in no way significant enough for the panel and the Environmental Protection Authority to approve this application and risk ignoring this application's many shortcomings - let alone the feelings of the community members who stand to be impacted. Failure to recognize this will see approval given to something that if erroneously granted; will have an impact on our community for generations to-come, I urge for this not to be the case.

Finally, it is not tenable for Contact Energy Limited to operate such a scheme in a district where they have lost the trust and respect of those that reside in the area within

which they are intending to operate. The dishonest manner in which they have conducted themselves over the past two years and their refusal to meet and consult with the community to the extent to which they require (and deserve) has caused them to lose their social licence to operate here. An exception to this now would not be healthy. Contact Energy Limited know this, hence their refusal to initiate any sort of public meeting or dialogue over the past 18 months. If this new application is supposed to be entirely independent of the application made previously under the initial fasttrack consenting regime, why has there not been a single public meeting regarding this project this time around? Contact Energy Limited forwent appeasing the local community here some time ago and for that reason – this would be a real concern for a local such as myself should this project be granted approval.

Unfortunately, should this project be eventually been given the green light, it will only have been allowed to be successful due to the fact that those that oppose this have busy lives, a small voice and empty pockets. I know that it might come a bit late, but the offer that I made to you in my previous invitation(s) to comment still stands: I would like very much to extend to-you (panel members and/or other relevant parties at the Environmental Protection Authority) an invitation, where we can spend as much time that could be spared; visiting local addresses of YOUR OWN choosing (unannounced) at random to gather the true thoughts of our local people. You will very quickly get a grasp of what I am pleading with you to understand here.

Thank you for considering my comments,

Hamish Robinson

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]