

Hon James Meager

Minister for the South Island
Minister for Hunting and Fishing
Minister for Youth
Associate Minister of Transport



10 December 2025

JMITC-24

Ian Gordon
Expert Panel Chair

By email: substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz

Fast-track Approvals Act substantive application – Southland Wind Farm

Dear Ian

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Contact Energy Limited's substantive application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 for the Southland Wind Farm project (the project).

I understand the proposed Southland Wind Farm is a major renewable energy infrastructure project intended to strengthen New Zealand's electricity generation and improve regional energy security.

The project proposes the construction and operation of up to 55 wind turbines, adding up to 380 Megawatts of wind generation capacity, producing between 850 and 1,400 Gigawatt hours (GWh) annually, enough to power approximately 150,000 homes.

Assessments indicate the project will inject between \$258.00 to \$426.00 million into the local economy during construction, supporting 184 to 304 fulltime equivalent (FTE) jobs and contributing up to \$127.00 million per year to gross domestic product (GDP) over the two-year build period. Once operational, the project is expected to provide 10 to 14 ongoing FTE jobs and contribute \$5.00 to \$9.00 million annually to GDP.

I note that Southland is currently a net importer of electricity, with regional demand exceeding local generation by an average of 1,036 GWh per year. While electricity from the proposed wind farm will enter the national grid, increasing local renewable generation will likely help reduce reliance on imported electricity, lower transmission losses, and support regional resilience as energy demand grows. Comments regarding specific impacts on local energy supply and transmission are noted for context, as detailed advice sits with the Energy portfolio.

I have considered the information provided in the substantive application for the project and its alignment with the priorities of my South Island portfolio. Its contribution to energy infrastructure aligns with national and regional priorities for renewable generation and energy security.

Yours sincerely,

Hon James Meager
Minister for the South Island
Minister for Hunting and Fishing
Minister for Youth
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*for the avoidance of doubt, I
strongly support this project,
it is a game-changer for
Southland.*