

9 April 2025

Stephanie Frame

Manager Delivery
Ministry for the Environment
8 Willis Street
Wellington 6143

Dear Stephanie,

RE: Application by Taheke 8C Limited (“T8CL”) for a Ministerial Referral for the Taheke 8C Hydroelectric Scheme under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024

T8CL is a subsidiary of The Proprietors of Taheke 8C & Adjoining Blocks Inc, a Māori land incorporation established by the Māori Land Court in 1954. It has more than 1,300 shareholder whanau members.

Interest in the Ōkere/Kaituna River as a potential site for hydroelectric generation stretches back decades to the 1960’s. The last scheme was taken through to feasibility stage design in 2008 designed by Tonkin+Taylor Limited for Todd Energy Limited. T8CL has completed its own full feasibility assessment through 2024 and 2025 and with the advice of DamWatch Ltd (working in close collaboration with Mitchell Daysh and the expert environmental assessment team) is proposing a new innovative design that delivers a c.16.4 MW rated hydropower scheme with a significant reduction in both capital costs and environmental effects.

This hydroelectric scheme can be developed in a way that:

- > Protects and enhances the mauri of the river.
- > Delivers economic benefits to the T8CL shareholders.
- > Supports New Zealand’s renewable energy and emissions goals while also providing significant national and regional renewable infrastructure.
- > Provides enduring environmental enhancements.

The Scheme will result in a positive shift in the mauri of the river, achieve Te Mana o te Wai and is consistent with its associated principles. It will inherently result in strong positive impacts in respect of Taheke 8C's Cultural Values including: Whakapapa, Whanau, Whanaungatanga, Mana Whenua, Kotahitanga, Tino Rangatiratanga, Kaitiakitanga, and Ahi Kā.

Currently, the Ōkere/Kaituna River and its environs are not pristine, or even optimal after years of farming, forestry and urban development, the invasion of pest plants and animals and given the nutrients and other impacts from urbanisation around the river and the two lakes which flow into it.

The Scheme will have significant local, regional and national benefits and provide a substantial contribution to regional and national electricity supply where over 82-84% of the Bay of Plenty electricity supply is currently imported from other parts of New Zealand.

It is estimated that the Scheme will have a Net Present Value (“**NPV**”) contribution of \$85m to regional economic activity generated from the construction and development of the Scheme over a period of 38 months to 2028. This in turn will support 780 regional jobs with over 400 of these in 2027. These figures relate to the direct, indirect and induced impacts.

Following this, over a 10-year period to 2038 the Bay of Plenty Region will benefit from approximately 20 high paid FTE jobs locally for operations. Additionally, the environmental offset and enhancement projects will create further investment to the regional economy and will support approximately 32 FTE jobs. By 2038, the project will contribute over \$106m to the regional economy and support over 1,030 FTE jobs (on average 74 local FTE jobs per annum).

These environmental projects, combined with the innovative low impact hydro design ensure that, overall, adverse environment effects are assessed by the expert environmental assessment team as being low, or very low in the long term. In some instances, a net environmental gain will arise, with respect to habitat restoration, ecological enhancements, the restoration of native species, wetland habitation. There will, however, be an unavoidable impact on kayakers who utilise the fast flow sections of river below an area called the Trout Pools.

The Scheme, once consented, will join the Taheke Geothermal Project in providing essential and significant national and regional renewable energy infrastructure (as defined in the Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement). Providing needed baseload and firming electricity the scheme will give resilience to the national grid in a key location, as other intermittent renewable electricity developments come online (such as solar and wind).

The importance of renewable energy and the drive to achieve or exceed the Government's national target for renewable generation underscores the importance of the project which is reflected at national, regional, and local levels.

Yours faithfully,



Stephen Daysh

Partner,
Mitchell Daysh Limited

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APPENDICES

- Appendix 1:** Location Map
- Appendix 2:** Records of Title
- Appendix 3:** Scheme Drawings
- Appendix 4:** Committee of Management Approval
- Appendix 5:** Concession Document
- Appendix 6:** Letter from Nova regarding use of Concession
- Appendix 7:** Letter from T8CL regarding use of Concession
- Appendix 8:** Planning Memorandum
- Appendix 9:** Effects Memorandum
- Appendix 10:** Consultation Schedule

