

Introduction

Thank you for inviting the Waihopai ToeToes Community Board (WTCB) to comment on this application. We appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts and concerns regarding the proposed project.

Main Concerns

- Community Feelings
- Consultation
- Red Lights
- Funding Back to Community – Mitigation
- Effect on Roding Infrastructure
- Traffic Management for Farmers Affected
- Effect of Two Windfarms in Close Proximity
- Engagement with Local Businesses Regarding Subcontracting Availability
- Liaison

Consultation Process

In 2024 when this proposed project was first announced, Contact proactively approached WTCB to discuss approaches to local consultation. They were receptive to the Board's advice and attended at least two WTCB meetings, as well as maintained regular phone communication to provide updates. The community consultation sessions were informative and scheduled at various times to accommodate different sectors of the community. These sessions were well received, with many attendees expressing interest and offering suggestions to Contact. Contact staff were available for individual discussions as needed.

Community Sentiment

We are aware that certain sectors of our community are strongly opposed to the proposed project. The primary concern is the visual impact that the turbines will have on their daily lives and the permanent change to the landscape. We believe these concerns are fair and reasonable and note that this sector has been an active and vocal presence. Other sectors of the community do not have any issues with the project or remain neutral.

Red Lighting on Turbines

Another major concern is the red lights that blink continuously on top of the turbines. Since the commissioning of the Kaiwera wind farm turbines, these lights have become a prominent feature in the night sky, visible from many areas in the Southland region. With the proposed extension of the Kaiwera Wind farm and the addition of the Slopedown Wind farm, the cumulative effect of increased red blinking lights is a

significant concern, extending beyond our immediate vicinity. Consideration should be given to reducing the impact of these lights, perhaps by directing them vertically into the sky rather than horizontally. If these are mandated by Civil Aviation, it would be worthwhile to review whether all turbines require such lighting.

Impact of Multiple Windfarms

The establishment of two wind farms in close proximity would result in a substantial change to our visual landscape. Should the proposal succeed, it is critical that a substantial community development fund be established to help mitigate the long-term impact on our communities. Careful consideration must be given to how such a fund is operated, recognising the effects both locally and across the wider Southland District.

Local Business Engagement

The WTCB strongly recommends that, where possible, local contractors be given opportunities for any contractual work arising from this proposed project.

Roading Infrastructure

We are concerned about the increased vehicle movements and their impact on our local roading infrastructure, particularly as many access roads are gravel. Additional maintenance will be required beyond the normal schedule, and it is unreasonable for these costs to fall solely on local ratepayers. Currently, these roads are not high usage routes.

Traffic Management for Farmers

Local farmers use the main access roads to move livestock as part of their daily operations. We recommend that Traffic Management plans be implemented for these farmers, such as allowing them to display a 20 km/h speed limit sign when moving stock. This measure should be in place for the duration of the project to ensure safety for increased road users.

Ongoing Liaison

If the project goes ahead, it would be beneficial to establish a liaison group to serve as a platform for the local community to voice ongoing concerns. In the longer term, we suggest regular reporting to the Community Board every six months or annually.

Thank you once again for seeking our comments.

Kind regards,
Pam Yorke
Chairperson, Waihopai ToeToe Community Board