

Hello Ian, Bridget, Roger, Graeme and Rob (amongst others at the Environmental Protection Authority),

As an occupier and owner of the property located at [REDACTED]; I have been invited to comment on the wind farm that Contact Energy Ltd. is proposing to construct on the Slopedown Hill in Eastern Southland.

Unfortunately, we as a community are being asked to go through this process again after already having been through it very recently. The comments to follow cover much of what was already included in my previous invitation to comment when Contact Energy Ltd. first applied for approval of this project via the Covid-19 Recovery Fast-track Consenting Process. However, I have included most of what I included in those previous comments because I am led to believe that this process is being carried out completely independent of the previous process carried-out under the Covid-19 Recovery Fast-track Consenting Process. I am also sure that all most all of what I said still applies today (after all nothing significant in relation to this project and its application has changed from what I can tell).

Please take the time to thoroughly read through my comments to follow. I do apologise in advance for the lengthy text that it is. However, as I am sure you can appreciate - there is a lot to divulge here, even though I fear that I have not even scratched the surface...

Unlike many in the district, I initially did not necessarily oppose the project and was certainly no way near as passionate about the topic as many of the other locals were. From the onset, these people believed the visual and sonic damage this project threatened to cause will not only be irreversible, but will exist amongst what remains to be one of the few large significant areas of untouched native forest east of this country's main divide. Personally, I was more-concerned with how these wind-farms stack-up economically. I had questions relating to the logic and feasibility regarding efficiently transmitting energy long distances (i.e. resistive loss in transmission lines amongst other things) from what is almost the very bottom of the country to the opposite reaches of New Zealand which inevitably uses a larger proportion of our country's electricity. This is a fact and is simply due to New Zealand's population distribution. I also had concerns relating to the lifespan of such infrastructure, particularly when compared to renewable energy-providing alternatives such as hydroelectric dams, tidal energy generation systems or even geothermal electricity plants. Does wind generation as a source of renewable energy really have the small environmental footprint we are being led-to believe once we consider the life expectancies of these structures that overseas countries (who are vastly more experienced in this field than we are) have found? Furthermore, can all the parts made redundant after the fact be ECONOMICALLY repurposed/recycled?

In fact, only this past week the Codrington Wind Farm (in Australia) has been in the news as it was planning to be decommissioned after only 25 years of service. They intend to simply bury the giant steel and concrete bases associated with that wind farm (totalling over 20,000 tonnes), much to the disgust of many locals. Why should it be the responsibility of future generations to manage these vast amounts of industrial waste? All for something that was in operation for such a short period of time.

Many of the main concerns I have about this project centre around Contact Energy Ltd. and their values as a company. From my perspective, over time, a particularly disingenuous attempt

on Contact Energy Ltd.'s part to railroad this project through was revealed much earlier in this process, when they applied for the approval of this project via the Covid-19 Recovery Fast-track Consenting Process. This has come without any consideration whatsoever for the local people who will have to live, work and play in this district for generations to-come, long after the executives and consultants that played a key role in constructing these obtrusive structures have left and returned to their homes nestled amongst the native bush overlooking Plimmerton beach or in a downtown capital city apartment. I also have some serious concerns regarding Contact Energy Ltd.'s track record and the way in which they engage with the communities that they are already currently involved-in with similar large scale electricity generation projects.

I distinctly remember Matthew Cleland (Head of Wind and Solar, Contact Energy Ltd.) assuring me in one of the first community open days they held that this project would not be going ahead if the local community made it clear that it was not wanted. This statement made by him has since been found to be a blatant lie. Contact Energy Ltd. has in-fact proceeded to go-ahead with this project at all costs - irrespective of the fact that an overwhelming majority of the local community is not supportive of it. In the applicant's response to our comments provided in the previously submitted application (under Covid-19 Recovery Fast-track Consenting Process), the fact that this comment was made publicly to me (amongst others in the room) was denied by Contact Energy Ltd. I was saddened to read this, particularly when I am able to verify that the iPhone that I had recording in my breast pocket would suggest otherwise...

Which leads me to my first point-of concern regarding Contact Energy Ltd. and their lack of integrity throughout this process. How are all people who stand to be impacted by this project able to be truly heard when applying for consent via this new Fast-track Consenting Process? Whilst I do appreciate that I (along with a small number of others) have been invited to comment, many will remain unheard.

The first real indication that made it clear to me that Contact Energy Ltd. truly had little regard for what the local people really thought about this project was made evident in the spring of 2023. In August 2023, small meetings were held in the Wyndham Town Hall where members of the community could book-in and make time to speak with the people responsible for initiating this project. I had half an hour with these people and also silently participated in a meeting that a small group of people from within our community representing the West Catlins Preservation Society had organised.

All community members who voiced their concern regarding this project at this early stage URGED Contact Energy Ltd. to at least have the good-grace to avoid applying for consent via the Covid-19 Recovery Fast-track Consenting Process. Are traditional consent-application methods still not-an option? Even though the previous application process has been superseded by a new process, how is this any different? On the face of it, it appears as if this new process gives local residents even less power to speak in relation to such a project...

In the early stages of this process, I watched a young local woman pleading with Contact Energy Ltd. management as tears flowed-down her face, to have the decency to be genuine in their consultation as she is being presented with the realisation of having to look directly into these massive wind turbines from a property which has been in their family for over a hundred years. Those representing Contact Energy Ltd. and Roaring40s Wind Power Ltd. deserve an Academy Award for the way in which they indicated that they would give the idea some 'thought' as they

seemingly appeared sincere in response to such requests. If they really were truly genuine in their consultation with the public, would it have been a problem to take the traditional path that-is applying-for a consent the first-time around?

A short time latter, we of-course learned that Contact Energy Ltd. had chosen to take the path of the Covid-19 Recovery Fast-track Consenting Process. I believe that this decision flew in the face of any such intention to genuinely consult with the community and at the very-least would have gone a long-way when it came to personal relations with a district that they were (hoping) to be working closely-with in the future. I also believe that this approach would have certainly aided in appeasing many of the 'neutrals' or even people like myself who up until that stage; had some reservations - but would not be against the idea in its entirety should a few of my questions be answered and concerns addressed. Personally, it was at this stage I realised that Contact Energy Ltd. could not be trusted and that we would have to-do whatever we could to ensure that this company was not ever able to be allowed to establish and operate a facility such as this on our front doorstep.

Apart from one flyer in our mailboxes a few weeks ago and maybe one or two emails over the last six months; we have had almost no communication from Contact Energy Ltd. regarding this application a second-time around and have certainly had no public meetings. It certainly appears as-if Contact Energy Ltd. knows that this project is extremely unpopular locally and so they have given-up on consulting with the people that this project will affect the most – choosing to continue attempting to force this application through remotely behind a vale of consultants and consenting process procedures.

This brings me to another major point-of concern I have; Contact Energy Ltd.'s refusal to organise (or attend) a public meeting at a set time on a set date at a central location capable of hosting a vast number of members from within the community all at once at ANY stage over the last two years; where all of the community member's questions can be answered and Contact Energy Ltd. can be held accountable. I was extremely disappointed to see that after the community had been attempting to organise such a meeting scheduled to occur on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2023, that Contact Energy Ltd. withdrew from participating in that meeting the morning prior.

From the very start, Contact Energy Ltd. has been very reluctant to organise or participate in any meetings where community members can have their say in a PUBLIC SETTING in conjunction with those that are supportive and neutral to the project concurrently. 'Open days' were only ever held over a period of two-three drawn-out days in a way where any such discussions could only be had on a one-on-one basis (where sometimes others within earshot could eavesdrop or participate somewhat); whereas other meetings were restricted to a small room where attendee numbers were limited. This method of consultation is much easier managed from Contact Energy Ltd.'s point of view and fails to hold them accountable in view of the ENTIRE community PUBLICALLY, particularly when it comes to some of the more 'prickly' topics of discussion. Their chosen method of consultation also failed to give any ideas or objection any real traction. I cannot help but think that this has been their intention from the start.

I believe that it would be extremely beneficial for both sides of the argument to hear what the opposing side has to say and their reasoning as to why they might be 'for' or 'against' the

establishment of this wind farm. Perhaps those in support of the project would convince those that are not that this is all not such a bad idea? If that was to happen and it was to eventually be found that a vast majority no longer opposes the idea of this wind farm, then the project would have my blessing, you can be guaranteed. Is this not how things should be done in a democracy?

As things stand currently, the fact that any such meeting poses to further increase opposition to this project is obvious and is the only reason that Contact Energy Ltd. has never wanted to participate in such a meeting. I cannot help but think that they are unwilling to advertise the thoughts of those against this project to those that are supportive of it, or even neutral. I am unsure if Contact Energy Ltd. has provided any reasons to (or have in-fact been asked-to) authorities or community members as to why they have not participated in such a meeting. From their perspective, to suggest that they were concerned that any such meeting would not remain civil or could not be easily managed due to unrest would also be a cop-out. Afterall, the lack-of-order or an increase in tensions that 'could' be seen in anyone at these public meetings would only be because of an increased level of feeling and passion against this project on the part of those in the community that oppose it. Public meetings regarding issues such as this are often held across the country and can be managed through proper organising with the use of an impartial moderator if required. I have always believed that it remains essential that a lengthy and comprehensive public meeting would need to be held (that is open to ALL members of the public) before any facet of this consent application is considered for approval. A follow-up meeting may also be required to define or answer any questions and concerns that Contact Energy Ltd. will 'conveniently' and undoubtedly not 'have the answers to yet' - a common theme so-far.

Similarly, I have also heard Contact Energy Ltd. staff members suggest that they believe that there is more support out there for this project than what is realised and that they are only not known-to US (those opposing this project) because of their fear of a backlash for speaking-out by those opposing the project. This idea is also absurd, not only do the few people I know who may support the idea of this project be unafraid of speaking their mind (who are typically open about the fact that they have something to gain themselves from the project), but the only reason they could ever possibly be concerned about the level of backlash they might encounter is because of the sheer level of opposition towards it! This cannot possibly be ignored.

Right from the very start, this project has reeked of the need to have the process expedited if it was ever going to have a chance of being approved (easily at least). The sheer opposition to this project has meant that its success has only ever hinged on the idea of any consent application being made under stealth and urgency and I am convinced that management at Contact Energy Ltd. knows this. This has been demonstrated so-far and is downright wrong. Many people are just exhausted and are giving-up. It is sad to see.

Whilst Contact Energy Ltd. have no doubt intended to give the impression that they have ticked the 'community consultation-completed box' as required by those that grant such consents (in this case, the Environmental Protection Authority/panel), do we really think that their actions since holding those meetings with us have ACTUALLY illustrated how genuine they really were in their community consultation? It seems to-me that it is pretty easy to fly-in, spend two or three days here nodding and appearing to listen for it to go in one ear and out the other. I feel behaviour like what I have described here is not representative of a genuine willingness to

consult with the community. Would any of the guys making these decisions be willing to live in our district themselves with the locals and send their kids to our schools for the next few years as these turbines are being erected? I should think not if they were to be completely honest with themselves...

My attitude towards this entire project has shifted from one of neutrality to one of severe opposition not only due to Contact Energy Ltd.'s behaviour throughout this process, but also in support of those who have been dead against this proposal from the start. This really is impacting on the mental health of some people (aggravated by the way in-which Contact Energy Ltd. have conducted themselves). In a world with an inflationary economic climate where we are all fighting to make a living post-covid, many of these people are involved in the agricultural industry which has latterly had its own specific regulatory challenges. Is it any wonder that people are exhausted? They really do not need this to deal-with on top of everything else that everyone has going-on in their lives. I can assure you that if it was not for all of life's other distractions and if those against this were really able to put the time and energy into opposing this project as they would like to be really able to-do, that Contact Energy Ltd. would not even come close to getting this proposal off the ground. Why does our busy lives and excessive workloads (not to mention lack-of funds) be the reason this project is able to be rammed-through by large corporations such as Contact Energy Ltd.? Does this seem fair?

The way in which Contact Energy Ltd. has appeared to lack the willingness to demonstrate genuine consultation to the very people that this will have the greatest impact-on is particularly concerning when they are the ones appealing to initiate and operate this facility on land for what will be at least the remainder of a lifetime for many of the locals affected. It is all too easy to push-through in a part of the country where less people reside and exist to fight such a proposal. Southlanders are people too. Such behaviour is not going to aid reducing division between the citizens of our country.

Any large corporate with deep pockets can pay any number of consultants to write-up a series of reports that are easily able to highlight the 'benefits' that such a project will bring to the economy and our country, as well as how any environmental effects are 'said' to be non-existent or can at least be 'mitigated,' without of course focusing on the true detrimental effects of such a proposal. I personally have had experience in the resource and discharge consenting process across at least two different industries - lots of words usually does-it. All too-often, whether it be via large payments made to key stakeholders and/or decision-makers or the ability to spend fortunes on lawyers and consultants; deep pockets eventually allow projects like this to get approval and go ahead, is this fair? At what stage is some of this money that is thrown-around allowed to be termed a bribe? Does this behaviour align with that of the constitution of our democratic nation?

Contact Energy Ltd. has attempted to sell this project to our community by suggesting that one of the 'many' benefits also includes cheaper electricity rates for locals. However, they have refused to guarantee and quantify such claims. Furthermore, they are not currently demonstrating that they are capable of 'walking the talk' with what we are currently seeing across the country. How can they be trusted when it comes to these claims when I know for a fact that the Clutha district is one of the most expensive regions in the country to purchase electricity? The Clutha district is situated downstream from two of the largest hydroelectric power schemes in the country, the Clyde and Roxburgh Dams (both of which are owned by

Contact Energy Ltd.); third and fifth respectively in terms of electricity generation capacity out of the approximately 20 major hydroelectric schemes that currently exist in this country.

This is demonstrated when we consider data provided by the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment. As of May 2024, Balclutha was the third least affordable town (out of the 42 localities spread across New Zealand detailed in the data) to purchase electricity within (at an average rate of \$0.44/kWh), behind only the particularly isolated West Coast town of Westport (also at an average rate of \$0.44/kWh) and Kerikeri (\$0.46/kWh). The township of Cromwell was sixth on this list at \$0.41/kWh whereas Auckland Central is the eighth MOST affordable place in the country to purchase electricity at \$0.33/kWh. Understandably, a town in the far north such as Kerikeri would usually be expected to pay more for electricity services due to its vast distance from the majority of the electricity generation schemes in the country. How then can it be explained that the Clutha district is having to pay such high prices for their electricity?

I have queried Contact Energy Ltd. on this fact and they have suggested that the fashion within which electricity is able to be transmitted and distributed around the Clutha region lies at fault here. Whilst I grant that this does have an impact (and is beyond the realms of Contact Energy Ltd.'s control in most instances), how can we possibly be convinced of this when the evidence suggests otherwise? As you may be aware, electricity is generally charged to consumers in two-parts; a lines component (to account for the distribution and supply of the electricity) and an energy component (consisting largely of the electricity itself). For this statement to be true, Balclutha would need to be observed paying significantly higher (than what is typical) lines charges (along with a lower energy component) when compared to other locations around the country. Upon studying the recent (and historic data), this is not necessarily found to be the case where most areas pay a line charge of 30-45% of their total energy bill. As of May 2024, Balclutha customers paid an average lines component charge of \$0.19/kWh (\$0.25/kWh energy component), Westport customers paid an average lines component charge of \$0.18/kWh (\$0.26/kWh energy component) and Kerikeri customers paid an average lines component charge of \$0.19/kWh (\$0.26/kWh energy component). This finding is not a recent one and has been evident for years. I would welcome having it proven to me that in reality, this IS NOT simply due to a lack of competing energy companies operating within the Clutha region.

When we consider that approximately one quarter of New Zealand's population (which correlates closely with our own electricity demand distribution) reside in the South Island and that we produce approximately half of this country's renewable power (in the South Island), can I be blamed for asking why-it is that we are being forced to generate additional electricity for what is largely distributed into the North Island of New Zealand? I cannot help but think that these large unpalatable projects prefer to be proposed in areas of the country where population densities are lower and opposition inevitably has a smaller voice. I would be much more receptive to the idea of additional power generation schemes on our front doorstep once opportunities in the North Island (such as the more-than 3,500MW of untapped potential that remains in the form of geothermal generation) have been exhausted.

Contact Energy Ltd. also suggests that additional benefits will be felt by the local community because this project has the potential to generate approximately 160 to 240 direct full-time equivalent jobs over a 2-year construction period; and 10 to 14 ongoing full-time equivalent jobs in the upkeep, maintenance, and servicing of the wind farm whilst it is in operation. How can we be assured that these jobs will be offered to locals here in Eastern Southland? Has this

been assured by Contact Energy Ltd.? Will it be guaranteed that any contract offered associated with the construction of this project will be offered to those already operating locally? Furthermore, I would be very surprised if the personnel and expertise required to service and maintain these wind turbines would be able to be sourced locally and would not necessitate the importation of specialised and appropriately qualified staff...

Contact Energy Ltd. has also attempted to sell this project to our region by suggesting that one of the 'many' benefits to it includes an injection of cash and investment into our local community. As expected, this idea has stood to get a number of our local council board members excited, as it has also for some of the wider community members from further afield (who will inevitably be somewhat less impacted-on than those located within a closer proximity of the proposed wind farm site). The few people that I am aware of being supportive of this project state this as one of their main reasons to be in support of it. I do hope that our local council representatives have worked hard to ensure that they have remained bipartisan in their comments to the panel and have truly reflected what the community thinks. It would be a shame if any personal views were found to have been the cause of any subconscious bias or undertones in any of these submissions from the community board level, even though they have vowed to remain 'representative' of the community. It must be stressed that to-date, Contact Energy Ltd. have refused to say how they will in-fact support the local community financially and to what level. Is this not telling?

If we investigate this further, have Contact Energy Ltd. proven themselves in this space when we look a little closer into the electricity generation schemes that they are already involved-in? Whilst it is evident that benefits have been observed in the town of Mossburn, Southland due (in-part) to the investment made by Meridian Energy Ltd. (who own and operate the White Hill Wind Farm located nearby), evidence does not suggest that Contact Energy Ltd. have willingly had the same impact in similar situations, particularly when the size and scale of many of their schemes is also considered. I do believe that Contact Energy Ltd. have contributed financially (somewhat minimally) to the town of Roxburgh (adjacent to the Roxburgh hydroelectric dam that Contact Energy Ltd. own and operate). Whereas most of the wealth brought into the Cromwell, Clyde and Alexandra areas has undoubtedly been due to the rise and influx of the tourism industry, encouraged in part due to the creation of a lake(s) as a result of the establishment of the two hydroelectric dams. Do we think tourism in the area that is the Catlins Forest will receive an economic boost due to tourism because of these wind turbines? I should think not.

Furthermore, has Contact Energy Ltd. been doing all that it can in situations as they relate to the visual effects influenced by the Clyde and Roxburgh dams? Contact Energy Ltd. is legally responsible for managing the visual effects caused by the build-up of silt in the Kawarau Arm on Lake Dunstan. What do the locals who live alongside the Kawarau Arm and its buildup of silt/sediment from the Kawarau River think? Old Cromwell has been heavily impacted by the buildup of driftwood (that wash onto the silt deposits) and the aquatic weed that is *Lagarosiphon major* that becomes established in the sediment. This sediment is typically high in organic matter which removes oxygen from the water as it decomposes. Lower oxygen levels result in changes to the pH of the water and increased pollutant levels meaning native ecosystems collapse and foul odours can be smelled in the warmer months, further impacting recreation. Sediment build-up has resulted in the shift of the shoreline which has also caused the Kawarau Arm to not be suitable for swimming, fishing or boats in recent years. Contact

Why should OUR community face the prospect of having to deal with this seemingly reluctant corporate energy provider should we also come across various issues as they relate to our proposed wind farm, (should it get the green light)? We are yet to still see any substantial results from this recently announced commitment by them on Lake Dunstan, let alone a long-term continuation of such actions.

[illegible]



I would also be interested to-know how the level of opposition to this proposal compares to other similar projects that have in the past (or are currently being proposed) been seen in this country. Based on the research I have done, I believe that the opposition to this project is stark in contrast to what was experienced prior to the construction of the White Hill Wind Farm near Mossburn (our only other significant wind farm in Southland up until recently), where of the 99 submissions made to the Southland District Council on the consent application, only 9 were opposed to the project. Consequently, the application was granted and it was not required to go to hearing in the Environment Court. In the case of Contact Energy Ltd.'s Slopedown Wind Farm, I could not possibly envisage this being the case should they have been forced to take a similar consent application path. As someone who has lived-in this district my entire life, I believe that I am well-qualified to make such a statement given my sound understanding of who everybody within the district is and where they stand on this issue. How ethical is-it that this project could only be looking to get across the line BECAUSE OF THE fast-track consenting process? I believe that in our case, submissions made for and against (assuming a similar consent-application process) would be quite the contrary to what was received prior to the construction of the White Hill Wind Farm, due mainly to three key factors specific to this wind farm and the hill that Contact Energy Ltd. are proposing to erect these wind turbines on:

- The stunning natural landscape that is known as the Slopedown Hill and the Catlins Forrest Park, with much of it consisting of preserved native bush where only the sound of nature can be heard. Also known for its wildlife and deep, dark skys that are free of light pollution; a place where photographers often visit to capture the aurora australis. This will no longer be possible with the whining sound of wind turbines in operation in conjunction with their aviation warning lights which are extremely conspicuous and are expected to flash throughout the night.
- The location and situation of the Slopedown Hill, which is prominent to the northern outlook (and viewed naturally from most homes that are built to a northerly aspect) of such a large proportion of rural residents in the lower half of Eastern Southland (making it the default view out of such a large number of people's living room windows) and to the north-east of much of the wider Southland district along the Southland plains stretching to Invercargill. This is of particular importance when it is considered that many other regional wind farms are located in significantly more obscure locations, all of which are positioned to the SOUTH of where the major local population bases reside. It must also be considered that in these cases, the sun does not usually rise or set on the opposing side of the wind turbines, reducing the likelihood of sunlight flicker impacting nearby residents (we are told this is not a factor at extended distances). For example, the White Hill Wind Farm lies south of the township of Mossburn and the large valley stretching across to Five Rivers within which the township and many rural residents are situated. On the other hand, fewer farms (comparatively) exist south/southwest of the hill where they can viewed from the upper Aparima River valley. The same can be said about the (significantly smaller) Flat Hill Wind Farm located near the township of Bluff which consists of only eight turbines that are less than a third of the height of the wind turbines Contact Energy Ltd. is proposing being constructed on the Slopedown Hill. This wind farm is situated to the south of the city of Invercargill and almost the entire Southland region whereas they can only be viewed looking north from the Foveaux Strait (and arguably Stewart Island on a clear day). Similarly, stage 1 of the more recently constructed Kaiwera Downs Wind Farm is located to the south of the busy Old Coach Road, the agricultural district of Kaiwera and southeast of the township of Gore. Whilst this wind farm can also be viewed from much of the wider Southland district

looking towards the north/northeast, the reduced height of these wind turbines (at this point in time), the lesser number of turbines (at this point in time) and their distance from the wider Southland area (all when compared to the number-of, height and location of the turbines being proposed for construction on the Slopedown Hill) within which they are located does make them somewhat less obvious to those having to look at these facing north/northeast. I do however sympathise with the few residents of the Waiarikiki Valley, which are looking directly at these turbines to their north/northeast and many locals are also concerned at what stage two of this project might entail as they look to be allowed to install more turbines at an increased height. This project has also highlighted to people from all over Southland how unappealing the incredibly luminous aviation warning lights that are fixed to the top of these towers really are at night.

- The sheer size and scale of this wind farm where at least fifty 220 m high wind turbines are being proposed to-be erected on the Slopedown Hill, nearly twice in number and over double the height of what was constructed at White Hill.

As someone who is relatively young; with a financial stake in land adjacent to this proposed wind farm (and a mortgage that would keep most people awake at night to go along with-it); the potential impact that such a project stands to have on our land values (and equity levels) is a very real concern. Several studies in recent years have been performed detailing the impact wind farms have been found to have on the value of nearby residential and rural properties. Most notably, having been conducted in Europe (including but not limited-to Germany, France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands) as well as in North America (namely southern/eastern Canada and across the majority of the mid-western United States of America). Having identified approximately 20 of these studies, I am sure that more may exist. I have also come across a very limited-amount of New Zealand-based information regarding this topic; however, at this stage much of the data made available appears largely speculative (based mainly on the opinions and observations shared by property valuers and/or those in the real estate industry in areas such as the Wairarapa/Manawatu and Wellington regions). I would welcome additional New Zealand-based research in this area to (ideally) be completed by an independent party using actual land sales data (with external influences considered in conjunction with this information) in areas that have previously been implicated by the establishment of a wind farm(s).

Unsurprisingly, when considering the overseas-based research often either initiated, funded or publicised by groups and/or organisations generally opposed to the establishment of wind farms (such as but not limited to advocacy groups, community groups or specific environmental groups); it has been found that wind farm establishment has had a negative impact on adjacent property values. Conversely, research often either initiated, funded and/or publicised by groups and/or organisations that would typically be in favour of the establishment of wind farms (such as but not limited to wind turbine manufacturers, energy companies or in some instances, government); it has been found that wind farm establishment has had no (or at least a negligible) impact on adjacent property values.

Whilst it is evident that the findings from the many studies performed overseas do tend to vary considerably (where variations in the size of the wind turbines, the number of wind turbines and of-course the proximity of said wind turbines to the concerned properties all have an influence); it is apparent that a decrease in land values between 1% and 12% has been

observed across the range of studies to have revealed a negative impact on local property values. I am yet to find a study where an increase in property values has been evident due to the erection of wind turbines nearby. With that considered, along with the fact that multiple studies have revealed no impact on land values, I do not think that it would be unrealistic to suggest a potential of 3-5% decrease to the value of our nearby properties due to the establishment of this wind farm (and it could easily be argued that this is a conservative value). It should also by-now be obvious to all of us that wind turbines have proven to be a particularly divisive topic amongst the populace; where all it takes is to have a perspective buyer of your property be a person of that negative opinion...

While this may not initially seem significant, approximate calculations indicate more than 15,000 hectares worth of land is associated with the addresses included in the list of *Persons identified to be invited to comment on the Southland Wind Farm* alone. Assuming productive land values that range between \$7,500/hectare and \$25,000/hectare (depending on the class of country), we are facing the prospect of a potential loss in equity for our community in excess of \$10 million. This is before we consider higher value lifestyle land parcels and the wider district and Southland region that will still have a view of the obtrusive objects. Given the extremely prominent situation of the Slopedown Hill and this proposed wind farm, any cost to our wider community stands to stretch well beyond several hundred million dollars.

Landowners who stand to gain financially via the lease of land to accommodate these wind turbines are duly compensated (generously by all accounts); whilst at the same time often stand to gain infrastructure such as roading and access across previously inaccessible land within their properties. Can I ask where the compensation is for those that are still required to live and work beneath these structures and stand to face a potential reduction in their land values? Whilst the extent to which this project will impact on our local land values can be debated, global evidence unequivocally reveals that the repercussions for us will not be positive. Is this fair?

This brings to my next area of concern; the wind turbines and their effective life. Overseas evidence suggests that their lifespan ranges from between 10 and 30 (plus) years, with few examples existing beyond these timeframes. This can however vary hugely and is dependent on the type of wind turbine considered and the environment within which they operate. There is the potential to upgrade/repower certain components of the wind turbines such as the composite turbine blades and/or the generation equipment (which stand to have a significantly shorter useful life when compared to the turbine towers and/or their concrete foundations). In cases where this has occurred, wind turbines have been found to exist the longest (30 plus years). However typically, recent advances in wind turbine technology (including but not limited-to their physical size) have often resulted in older wind turbines being decommissioned and new (more modern) ones being reconstructed (as opposed to the former structures being upgraded). At times, this has also often been found to occur across the globe in schemes where the original wind turbines had not yet reached the end of their useful life. In several extreme cases; wind turbines have been found to have a life as short as seven years because of this! These practices do not contribute positively to the story that-is disposing of these structures and their waste responsibly. Whether or not this continues to be the case remains to be seen. Nonetheless, it is very likely that this wind farm would need to be either updated significantly, re-powered, reconstructed or decommissioned within the lifetime of many of us, should it be approved. Has the true realisation of the impacts of this been fully considered? Wind turbine

technology (even by global standards) has only really advanced significantly in the past couple of decades. Because of this, I am not convinced that the world as a whole has been able to fully grasp these implications.

I haven't yet even touched-on the issue that-is disposing of the composite-based materials used in manufacturing the blades for these wind turbines! However, I am running out of time to have this completed by the end-of today, so I am going to have to leave it there. I could easily take the time with Google Maps to highlight a number of sites where these are either buried in landfill and/or have remained stockpiled for years due to it being uneconomic to recycle them;

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/KK3igNxNPDSi9QR37>

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/rE2NhXT3hS6deFva7>

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/aqCKn7STX1sxYC5AA>

Feel free to reach out if you want more of these examples...

Approximately one quarter of kiwis live down here in the South Island, yet we produce approximately half of this country's renewable energy. Are we not doing-our bit? I want to make it clear that I am certainly not against removing red-tape and streamlining the consenting process in many instances, such as when an occupier wishes to build a house or a landowner or business person is required to construct/use/extract/discharge something that is relatively insignificant at a district level; nor am I against the production of electricity - which we need to operate our businesses and live our lives. But is this proposal not significant-enough to be scrutinised a bit more rigorously where much weight **MUST** be put on what the local community wants? Afterall, these are the people that are going to be forced-to look out their lounge window in the morning at in excess of **50** wind turbines that will be by-far the tallest man-made structures in the South Island, reaching a height equivalent to the upper viewing deck on the Auckland Sky Tower (220 m)!!!

I would like to finish by presuming that I am corresponding here with (at least some) people who are not local to our corner of Eastern Southland. I do know realise that the panel may have participated in a tour of the proposed project site (via car and/or helicopter) – even though I struggle to understand how that alone is able to provide you with a sufficiently sound understanding of the Slopedown Hill and what it means to our district. Because of this, you may be finding it difficult to contemplate why-it is that many local people are so upset about this proposal. I would urge anyone reading this who will eventually have an influence as to whether this project may or may-not be given the green light to consider whether or not they think that they could ever really go to bed at night with a clear conscious without taking the time to get to know some of the people who will be directly affected by the construction and ongoing operation of this wind farm.

I am also aware of the fact that as someone who by-now might have made it quite clear to you that I now strongly oppose this proposal and so may be perceived to be providing you with biased statements regarding the level of support (or lack thereof) associated with it. Therefore, I welcome you to fact-check anything that I have stated within this comment and would like to extend to-you (panel members and/or other relevant parties) 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.

I would also like the panel this time around to ask themselves why they believe that this project should be given the greenlight NOW when an application for this very project has already been received, heard, scrutinised, and then ultimately declined previously under the Covid-19 Recovery Fast-track Consenting Process. I believe this newly appointed panel would need a very good reason to contradict the findings of the panel previously appointed to process this application and simultaneously destroy an entire community's outlook and environment. I plead with you to give this some serious thought.

I would like to thank you very much for inviting me to comment on the wind farm that Contact Energy Ltd. is proposing to construct on the Slopedown Hill in Eastern Southland, as well as the additional few that were added from within the Redan/Mokoreta Valleys. Thank you for taking the time to read through my comments and I would cherish hearing from a member of the panel in the near future.

Talk soon, Hamish Robinson

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]