

File ref: 26-BRF-02918 / FTAA-2608-1275

19 October 2026

Lisa Mead
Manawa Energy Limited and Contact Energy Limited (the applicant)
Email: [REDACTED]

C/- Vanessa Hamm and Cory Lipinski
Holland Beckett (the agent)
Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Lisa

Section 28 – Notice of Decisions on the referral application for the Coleridge Hydro-electric Power Scheme Reconsenting Project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

This notice of decisions is for a referral application received from Manawa Energy Limited and Contact Energy Limited (the applicant) for the Coleridge Hydro-electric Power Scheme Reconsenting Project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act).

Project details

The project seeks approvals to enable the ongoing operation and maintenance of the existing Coleridge Hydro-electric Power Scheme (the scheme), located around Lake Coleridge in the Selwyn District, Canterbury.

The project area is located at and around Lake Coleridge within the Rakaia River catchment, approximately 100 kilometres west of Christchurch. The applicant has identified a number of areas of public conservation land (PCL) that may be located within the project area, noting that further investigations are required to determine the full extent of PCL potentially affected by the project.

The scheme currently generates, and is expected to continue generating, up to 39.5 MW (megawatts) of electricity, with an average annual output of approximately 270 GWh (gigawatt-hours).

The scheme utilises Lake Coleridge and associated water diversion, storage and conveyance infrastructure to generate electricity, including water takes and diversions from the Wilberforce, Harper and Acheron Rivers, canals, tunnels, penstocks, a power station, and a tailrace discharging to the Rakaia River. The project seeks approvals to enable the continued operation and maintenance of this existing infrastructure and any associated works and activities required for the operation and maintenance of the scheme.

The applicant seeks the following approvals via the fast-track approvals process to authorise the project, including some approvals sought at this stage on a precautionary basis, subject to further investigations prior to any substantive application:

- a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) as described in section 42(4)(a) of the Act
- b. concessions under the Conservation Act 1987 as described in section 42(4)(e) of the Act
- c. wildlife approvals under the Wildlife Act 1953 as described in section 42(4)(h) of the Act
- d. an approval, a dispensation, or an authorisation that would otherwise be applied for in respect of a complex freshwater fisheries activity under the Freshwater Fisheries Regulations 1983 or the Conservation Act 1987 as described in section 42(4)(j) of the Act.

Statutory framework for referral applications

The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.

The project can only be accepted if the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) is satisfied the criteria in section 22 are met, which includes being satisfied the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits and referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost effective way than under normal processes, and is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

Under section 21(3) of the Act, the Minister must decline a referral application if:

- the Minister is satisfied that the project does not meet the criteria in section 22
- the Minister is satisfied that the project involves an ineligible activity
- the Minister considers they do not have adequate information to inform the decision.

Additionally, the Minister has the discretion to decline a referral application for any other reason, even if the project meets the criteria outlined in section 22 of the Act.

Decision on referral application

The Minister has decided to accept the referral application under section 21(1)(c) and refer the whole project to the fast-track approvals process under section 26(2)(a). The Minister is satisfied that the project meets the criteria in section 22 of the Act, for the reasons detailed below.

Reasons for accepting referral application

The Minister is satisfied the project:

- a. is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits; and
- b. referring the project to the fast-track approvals process –
 - i. would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes; and

- ii. is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

Specifically, the Minister is satisfied the project meets the criteria in section 22 of the Act because:

- a. the project, for the continued operation and maintenance of the Coleridge Hydro-electric Power Scheme, is an **infrastructure project** that would have **significant regional and national benefits** [section 22(1)(a)] because it will:
 - i. enable the continued functioning of existing regionally and nationally significant infrastructure [section 22(2)(a)(ii)] by enabling the ongoing operation of an existing renewable electricity generation scheme that generates up to 39.5 MW of electricity, produces approximately 270 GWh annually, and supplies electricity to the National Grid
 - ii. deliver significant economic benefits [section 22(2)(a)(iv)] through the continued operation of the scheme, maintaining existing economic activity associated with its operation and maintenance and avoiding the need for substantial investment in replacement generation infrastructure
 - iii. support climate change mitigation [section 22(2)(a)(vii)] through the continued generation of renewable electricity and reducing the need for electricity generation from fossil fuel sources
- b. referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate its delivery [section 22(1)(b)(i)], including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes by enabling the approvals required under multiple Acts to be considered through a single integrated process, reducing the time, cost and complexity associated with obtaining those approvals through standard statutory pathways
- c. referring the project is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process [section 22(1)(b)(ii)] because the project relates to the reconsenting of an existing hydro-electric power scheme and does not involve any unusually complex or novel issues beyond those typically considered by an expert panel.

The Minister is satisfied there is no reason they must decline the project under section 21(3) of the Act. The Minister is also satisfied there is no reason to decline the project under section 21(4) and (5) of the Act.

Specified matters for accepted referral application

1. Manawa Energy Limited and Contact Energy Limited, who lodged the referral application, as the persons who are authorised to lodge a substantive application for the project under section 27(2) of the Act.
2. Under section 27(3)(b)(i) of the Act, a deadline of three years from the date of issue of this letter applies for lodging the substantive application.

3. Pursuant to section 27(3)(b)(ii) of the Act, the following information must be submitted by the applicant with the substantive application lodged for the project: an assessment of the project's consistency with the National Water Conservation (Rakaia River) Order 1988.
4. In relation to a substantive application for the project, pursuant to section 27(3)(b)(iii), the panel must invite comments from Transpower New Zealand Limited, in addition to those specified in section 53.

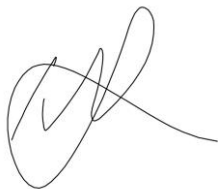
Other matters

Under section 28 of the Act, the Secretary for the Environment must also give written notice of decisions made by the Minister on an accepted referral application to the parties specified in Appendix 1 of this letter.

If you have any queries about this notice of decisions, please email referral@fasttrack.govt.nz and include the name of the lead contact – Ashiley Sycamore.

If you have any queries about the substantive process, please email contact@fasttrack.govt.nz or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 225 537).

Yours sincerely



Max Gander-Cooper

Acting Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix 1: Section 28 – Notice of Minister’s decision on accepted referral application

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Section 28(1)(a) – The applicant	Contact Energy Limited and Manawa Energy Limited
Section 28(1)(ii) – Anyone invited to comment on the application	
<i>Relevant local authorities</i>	Selwyn District Council Canterbury Regional Council
<i>Relevant portfolio Ministers</i>	Minister for the Environment Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti Minister for Māori Development Minister for Energy Minister of Conservation
<i>Relevant administering agencies</i>	Department of Conservation
<i>The Māori groups under s17(d)</i>	Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga Te Taumutu Rūnanga Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua Whitiora Centre Limited Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited Aoraki Environmental Consultancy Limited
<i>Any other persons under s17(5)</i>	Chief Executive of Transpower New Zealand Limited Minister of Climate Change Minister for the South Island Minister for Regional Development Minister for Economic Growth
Section 28(2) – Other parties for an accepted referral application	
<i>The Panel Convener</i>	Including all the information received by the Minister as required by section 28(4).
<i>Any iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities (other than those that must be notified as identified above) that the Minister considers have an interest in the matter</i>	No additional iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities have been identified beyond those listed above.
<i>Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)</i>	Including all the information received by the Minister as required by section 28(4).
<i>Relevant administering agencies</i>	As identified above.