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Enquiries to: Dawn Pritchard



Private Bag 3038
Waikato Mail Centre
Hamilton 3240, NZ

waikatoregion.govt.nz
0800 800 401

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Waitomo District Council
PO Box 404
Te Kuiti 3491

Email: info@waitomo.govt.nz and craig@craigshearer.co.nz

Tēnā koe,

Waikato Regional Council Submission on application for resource consent Taumatotara Wind Farm Limited (RM200019)

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the application for resource consent RM200019 – Taumatotara Wind Farm located at Taumatotara West Road, Te Kuiti. Please find attached the Waikato Regional Council's staff submission. We would welcome further discussion regarding the application.

Should you have any queries regarding the content of this document please contact Dawn Pritchard, Senior Policy Advisor, Policy Implementation, Science, Policy and Information directly on (07) 949 5153 or by email Dawn.Pritchard@waikatoregion.govt.nz.

Ngā mihi nui,

Lisette Balsom
Manager, Strategic Policy Implementation

Submission from Waikato Regional Council on the application for resource consent RM200019 – Taumatotara Wind Farm – Taumatotara West Road, Te Kuiti

Introduction

1. Waikato Regional Council (WRC) appreciates the opportunity to make a submission on the application for resource consent RM200019 – Taumatotara Wind Farm – Taumatotara West Road, Te Kuiti.
2. In this case, WRC's key areas of interest relate to the ecological assessment provided with the application and the Boffa Miskell Ecologists review reference BM19855 and dated 11 September 2021.
3. We agree with Waitomo District Council's Consultant Ecologist and share their concerns about the lack of understanding with regard to what species are present on-site, in particular knowledge of actual bird and bat activity at each of the turbine sites and their distribution across the site. We consider that the applicant will need to undertake further ecological assessment of actual bird and bat activity occurring.
4. There is a lack of mitigation methods submitted in this application to sufficiently support that birds and bats will not be adversely affected. We consider that the increased wind turbine height and rotor diameter will have a significant impact on bird flight direction from the coastal to inland environment and that increased noise volume will have adverse effects. The applicant will need to investigate mitigation methods further so that it is clear as to whether birds and bats will be impacted and to what extent.
5. WRC staff also consider there has been insufficient assessment of bird migration and potential bat collisions and that further field surveys should be carried out before consent is granted to better understand any potential impacts on birds and bats. We subsequently agree with Waitomo District Council's Consultant Ecologist that two days of using bat monitors is inadequate for recording such activities.
6. We recommend that the applicant should talk to the Department of Conservation (DOC) given the conservation status of long tailed bats and that this protected species has been sighted on the Taumatotara windfarm.

Further Information and Hearings

7. WRC does not wish to be heard at the hearings for resource consent RM200019.
8. WRC could not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.

Submitter details

Waikato Regional Council
Private Bag 3038
Waikato Mail Centre
Hamilton 3240

Contact person: Dawn Pritchard
Senior Policy Advisor (Policy Implementation)
Email: Dawn.Pritchard@waikatoregion.govt.nz
Phone: (07) 949 5153

I could not gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.

I am not directly affected by an effect of the subject matter of the submission that:

a) does not adversely affect the environment; and

b) does not relate to trade competition or the effects of trade competition