

10 May 2021

Ventus Energy (NZ) Ltd  
c/o VGA  
Unit G-12, The "Zone-23" Complex, 23 Edwin Street  
Mount Eden, Auckland, New Zealand



Attention: Glenn Starr ([glenn@ventusenergy.co.nz](mailto:glenn@ventusenergy.co.nz))

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## **APPLICATION FOR TAUMATATOTARA WINDFARM**

Dear Glenn,

Further to the receipt of your response to the further information request received by Council on 12 April 2021.

The Council review team has assessed the further information response in detail and have a number of questions of clarification arising from that s92 information package. Further details and clarification is required on the matters set out below and should be considered as an additional response to the 7 September 2020 s92 further information request.

The provision of this clarification is essential in order for Council to make a determination with respect to notification and further processing of the application.

### **Transportation**

#### *Explanation*

*Mr Lindsay Boltman from BBO now concurs that the assessment of bridge condition can be conducted at a later stage. However, he still requires confirmation of the transport route for clarity over the consent conditions and any mitigation that may be required. Currently the 2005 Taumatotara report states that: The most direct, and hence, preferred, route is for the components to arrive at New Plymouth Port then northbound along SH3. Due to the width constraints of the Awakino Tunnel, the wider components such as nacelles and tower sections would be transported along the Marokopa Rd, via Te Anga to the site. The blades would continue along the Waitomo to Taharoa Road and then turn left into Taumatotara Road.*

1. As at May 2021, the SH3 upgrade project to bypass the Awakino Tunnel is almost complete and is expected to be opened to traffic later in 2021. On the basis of this change please provide confirmation of the transport route (all road sections excluding State Highway) that will be utilised by the applicant to deliver the turbines, components and other infrastructure into the windfarm site. It would be important to understand if there is now any need to utilise the Marokopa to Taharoa Road or if all components can be transported via SH3 to Taharoa Road?

### **Noise**

#### *Explanation*

Ms Siiri Wilkening from Marshall Day Acoustics has reviewed the Altissimo noise assessment information and is now satisfied that the proposed wind farm can comply with the relevant noise limits, and that the effects would be insignificant and generally inaudible, at most of the closest dwellings. Ms Wilkening has also proposed a number of draft consent conditions that she recommends imposing on the consent, should consent be granted. These draft conditions are set out below as an indication of what they may look like and comments are invited.

### Operational Noise

7. The noise from all other activities on the site (other than wind turbine generator operation and construction activities) shall not exceed the following limits when measured in accordance with the requirements of NZS6801:19912008 Acoustics – Measurement of Environmental Sound and assessed in accordance with the requirements of NZS6802:19912008 Acoustics – Assessment of Environmental Sound Noise:

7.00am to 7.00pm 45 dBA  $L_{10Aeq}$

7.00pm to 7.00am 35 dBA  $L_{10Aeq}$

7.00pm to 7.00am 60 dBA  $L_{AFmax}$

*[We recommend updating the noise descriptors to the most up to date descriptors in line with the National Planning Standard requirements. This change would not make a material difference to the outcome but would represent best practice.]*

8. The noise from the wind farm shall comply with the requirements of NZS6808:19982010 Acoustics – The Assessment and Measurement of Sound from Wind Farm Noise Turbine Generators in relation to any dwelling existing at the date of granting of this consent, except:

(a) Any dwelling on any site that forms part of the wind farm; and

(b) The dwellings labelled as H1, H2, H2A, H3, and H4 on the approved plans in Annex A of these conditions.

*[This reference should be amended and clarified by attaching a figure or clearer identification to the conditions set]*

9. Prior to commencing any development of the wind farm, detailed ambient noise monitoring shall be undertaken within the notional boundary of any dwelling within the 30 dB  $L_{A90(10min)}$  noise contour as predicted using the proposed wind turbine generator specifications and applying the UK Institute of Acoustics Good Practice Guide 2013 prediction methodology (other than the dwellings specifically referred to in (a) and (b) of condition 8 above) by a person suitably qualified and experienced in acoustics and accepted by the Manager, Policy and Planning, Waitomo District Council. The monitoring shall be undertaken to determine the existing background sound in terms of accordance with the requirements of NZS6808:19982010 Acoustics – The Assessment and Measurement of Sound from Wind Farm Noise Turbine Generators. Sufficient field measurements shall be undertaken to demonstrate to the satisfaction of The results of the survey(s) shall be provided to Council's Manager, Policy and Planning within 1 month of completion of the survey(s), that the best fit regression curve gives an accurate representation of the existing noise environment.

*[Reference to the relevant NZS6808 standard is sufficient to ensure that measurements capture enough data to result in an accurate regression curve]*

10. Prior to commencing any development of the wind farm, the consent holder shall prepare a noise report to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of Council's Manager, Policy and Planning, that the wind farm will comply with the requirements of NZS6808:19982010 Acoustics – The Assessment and Measurement of Sound from Wind Farm Noise Turbine Generators. This report shall be prepared by a person suitably qualified and experienced in acoustics and accepted by the Manager, Policy and Planning, Waitomo District Council.
11. The wind turbines shall not exceed a rotor tip height of 110 metres above ground level and a sound power of 107.2 dBA unless it can be demonstrated by a person specialising in acoustics and accepted by the Manager, Policy and Planning, Waitomo District Council that higher turbine heights or sound power will still comply with the requirements of NZS6808:19982010 Acoustics – The Assessment and Measurement of Sound from Wind Farm Noise Turbine Generators.

### Construction Noise

12. – 15. *[No changes recommended]*

### Noise Monitoring

16. Within six months of the commencement of operation of the wind farm, the wind farm noise levels shall be measured at the same locations as undertaken for condition 9, or, if no dwelling is within the 30 dB LA90(10 min) contour, at the dwelling at which the highest wind farm noise level has been predicted as required by condition 9 (excluding those referred to in condition 8(a) and (b)). ~~and~~ Results shall be provided to the Manager, Policy and Planning, Waitomo District Council within 1 month of completion of the survey(s).

*[If no location falls into the 30 dBA contour, at least one measurement shall be undertaken at the next most affected position to check the predictions]*

17. The consent holder shall pay all costs associated with noise compliance measurements, monitoring and reporting."

## **Ecology**

Ms Leigh Bull of Boffa Miskell Ltd has reviewed the Ecology aspects of the further information response and provided a comprehensive memo outlining her current view on these issues. I have summarised her memo below and attach a copy as **Attachment 1** to this letter.

### *Avifauna*

Ms Bull has raised concerns over the insufficient survey effort and lack of a targeted methodology to assess the implications of the proposed windfarm variation on At Risk NZ Falcons. On that basis, Ms Bull recommends a pre-construction consent condition requiring a targeted NZ Falcon survey over four seasons (summer, autumn, winter, spring) with adaptive management conditions to be adopted depending on the results of that survey. A series of draft consent conditions relating to avifauna ecology are recommended in Ms Bull's memo for consideration.

### *Bats*

The bat survey results provided as part of the section 92 response confirm that some of the highest areas of bat activity recorded at locations where the turbines are proposed to be increased in size. Ms Bull notes that the recommendation to move straight to a mitigation/off set package is inconsistent with the accepted effects mitigation strategy in that all efforts should first be made to avoid the effect in the first place.

In addition, Ms Bull considers the proposed mitigation package lacking in terms of the effectiveness of bat detection and deterrent technology on NZ Bats and justification for the appropriateness of the proposed predator control. There is no evidence provided to confirm that predator control over 200 hectares of native forest habitat is in accord with the scale of the project particularly given there is no information provided by the applicant over target species, control programmes or duration.

The overall understanding of bats has increased significantly since the original Taumatotara windfarm consent was granted in 2006 however this understanding has not been reflected in the approach taken by the consultants to address potential effects on bats. Ms Bull does not agree with the approach taken by the applicant's consultant ecologist in terms of the potential level of effect on bats arising from the proposed variation and the selected approach to go directly to a mitigation/offset package.

2. Please engage with the Department of Conservation in relation to the presence of NZ Bats on the Taumatotara windfarm site given that the species is protected by law (Wildlife Act 1953). We seek written feedback from the Department of Conservation in relation to the presence of bats on the site and the extent of any offsets/compensation that is offered. This is particularly important given that bats are considered "*threatened - nationally critical*" and it is illegal to harm or kill bats without approval from the Department of Conservation.

## Landscape

Mr Dave Mansergh has undertaken a review of the further landscape and visual effects information provided dated 3 February 2021. Mr Mansergh notes in his technical memo that he is now satisfied that sufficient additional information has been provided to better understand the effects of the proposed changes to the turbine heights, however he remains concerned over some technical aspects of the WSP LVE report and the Energy3 montages.

Mr Mansergh has raised specific concerns around the visual effects views from the dwellings and living areas associated with those properties in and around the northern eleven turbines that were not visited by WSP (Taharoa Road, Te Waitere Road & Taumatatotara West Road). He is unable to verify how these effects ratings have been determined and therefore their validity. On that basis, he expects the effects levels to be **greater** from some locations, particularly those locations in and around the northern eleven turbines. Specifically, he considers that from some properties to the north of the site, some of these effects may be greater than the "less than minor" notification threshold contained in the RMA.

On this basis, I **attach** Mr Mansergh's technical review memo which contains a map showing those properties where he does not agree with the less than minor effects assessment provided by WSP (see **Attachment 2**).

3. The applicant is invited to undertake consultation with the landowners and occupiers of those properties identified on the MGLA map to seek written approval to the proposed turbine height increase. Alternatively, these properties will be considered as affected parties for the purpose of a notification assessment.

I also note that we are still waiting on feedback from the applicant with respect to question 1 of the 7 September 2020 further information letter in relation to tangata whenua consultation. Please note that the statutory processing timeframes remain suspended until this information is provided.

Please contact Chris Dawson, BBO who is processing this application on behalf of Waitomo District Council on 0275 333 899 or [cdawson@bbo.co.nz](mailto:cdawson@bbo.co.nz) if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully



Terrena Kelly  
**General Manager – Strategy and Environment**

## **Attachment 1**

Boffa Miskell memo  
regarding Taumatotara windfarm  
ecological surveys

## **Attachment 2**

Mansergh Graham  
Landscape Architects memo