



Contact's proposal for a new geothermal power station at 'Te Mihi'

Contact Energy Limited is proposing to build a new geothermal power station in the Wairakei-Tauhara Geothermal Field in an area known as 'Te Mihi' near Taupo.

The Te Mihi power station will produce approximately 220 megawatts of electricity, and includes the construction, operation and maintenance of a 220kV transmission line, associated support structures, equipment and facilities. It also includes realignment of a section of the existing Poihipi Road Power Station transmission line and modification works necessary to enable connection of the new line to the existing Wairakei-Whakamaru B transmission line. A copy of the applications can be found on Contact's website: www.contactenergy.co.nz/

The Minister for the Environment, Hon Trevor Mallard, has called in Contact's applications for resource consent needed for its Te Mihi power station proposal under the Resource Management Act 1991. As part of the call in, the Minister will refer Contact's applications to an independent Board of Inquiry. The role of the Board is to consider these applications, hold public hearings and make a decision about whether or not to grant the resource consents.

You can have a say about the Te Mihi proposal by making a submission to the Minister. Submissions must be received by **7 March 2008**. The Minister then refers these submissions to Board of Inquiry.

WHY HAS THE MINISTER CALLED IN THE TE MIHI PROPOSAL?

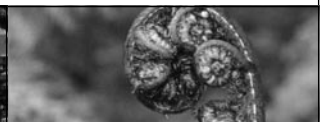
The Minister considers the proposal to be of national significance because:

- The proposal is relevant to New Zealand's international obligations to the global environment in terms of the Kyoto Protocol including the proposal's contribution towards the achievement of the target of 90% of electricity generation to be from renewable energy sources by 2025 as set out in the *New Zealand Energy Strategy to 2050*.
- Geothermal systems are a natural resource that is limited to a relatively small area of New Zealand. This proposal will involve a significant use of this limited resource when viewed in the context of the totality of geothermal systems available for development.

HOW CAN I HAVE A SAY IN THIS PROCESS?

Any person can make a submission by filling in the submission form and returning it to the addresses given on page 3 of this leaflet. The closing date for submissions is **5.00 pm on Friday 7 March 2008**. Please see the information in this leaflet about how to fill in the submission form.

The Minister will refer the application and submissions to a Board of Inquiry which will hold public hearings to consider the applications and submissions.



WHAT DO CONTACT'S APPLICATIONS COVER?

Contact has applied for land-use consents from the Taupo District Council for the construction of the power station itself, a new switchyard, a 220kV transmission line and other works to enable connection of the new line to the existing Wairakei-Whakamaru B electricity transmission line.

Contact also needs resource consent for discharges to land and groundwater and for the discharge of contaminants to air, and has applied for these consents from Environment Waikato.

WHAT IS THE BOARD OF INQUIRY?

The Minister will appoint a Board of Inquiry following the Cabinet process for appointments. A Board of Inquiry must be chaired by a current, former or retired Environment Court judge. It can have a total of three to five members.

Once established, the Board of Inquiry will consider Contact's Te Mihi proposal. The Board will decide whether to commission any reports and it will also establish the process for hearing public submissions. The duration of the hearing will depend upon the number and nature of submissions.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- 1 The Minister placed a public notice in national and local newspapers about the direction to call in Contact's proposal and calling for submissions on 9 February 2008.
- 2 Submissions close 20 working days after public notification being **5.00 pm Friday 7 March 2008**.
- 3 The Minister appoints a Board of Inquiry. The Board receives all the submissions from the Minister.
- 4 The Board holds a public hearing. The timing on this is dependant on the Board's processes. All submitters who wish to be heard by the Board will be advised.

- 5 The Board releases a draft report. This is sent to all submitters, Contact, relevant councils and the Minister for comment.
- 6 The Board releases its decision on Contact's resource consent applications.
- 7 The Board's decision can only be appealed to the High Court on points of law.

WHICH COUNCILS ARE INVOLVED IN THE CONTACT PROPOSAL?

Environment Waikato and Taupo District Council.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF COUNCILS IN THE PROCESS?

Councils can make submissions and attend hearings.

If the Board of Inquiry grants the resource consents for the power station, Environment Waikato and Taupo District Council would administer these consents.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?

The Ministry for the Environment will service the Board of Inquiry for administration of its functions.

HAS THE MINISTER INTERVENED TO MAKE SURE CONTACT'S PROPOSAL IS APPROVED?

No. Contact's applications will be judged on their merits by the Board of Inquiry in accordance with the provisions of the Resource Management Act 1991. The Board of Inquiry – not the Minister – will make the decision. This decision can only be appealed on points of law to the High Court.

WHERE CAN I VIEW THE PROPOSAL?

Contact's resource consent applications are available for viewing at the locations below:

Ministry for the Environment

Auckland Office
Level 6, Tower Centre
45 Queen Street
Auckland

Wellington Office
Environment House
23 Kate Sheppard Place
Wellington

Environment Waikato

Hamilton Office
401 Grey Street
Hamilton East

Taupo Office
Paora Hapi Street
Taupo

Taupo District Council

Taupo Office
72 Lake Terrace
Taupo

Taupo Office
Gillespie Plaza
Heuheu Street
Taupo

Mangakino Service Centre
Rangatira Drive
Mangakino

A copy of the applications can also be found on Contact's website: www.contactenergy.co.nz/ or on CD Rom by request to the Ministry for the Environment on 0800 836 444.

HOW CAN I OBTAIN A SUBMISSION FORM?

A submission form should be enclosed. If not, please download it from the Ministry for the Environment's website www.mfe.govt.nz, or use the Ministry's contact details provided to request one.

HOW TO FILL IN A SUBMISSION FORM

Your submission must be in writing, dated, signed by you and include the following information:

- 1 Your name and address for service, including a phone number, fax number and email address (if applicable).
- 2 Details of the application(s) for resource consent in respect of which you are making the submission.
- 3 Whether you support or oppose the relevant application(s) for resource consent or whether you are neutral about the application(s).
- 4 The reasons for your views.
- 5 The decision you wish the Board of Inquiry to make, including the general nature of any conditions sought.
- 6 Whether or not you wish to be heard in respect of this submission.

Please send your submission by **5.00 pm on Friday 7 March 2008** to the Minister for the Environment. You **MUST ALSO** send a copy to Contact. See the addresses below:

FreePost Te Mihi Call In

Minister for the Environment
PO Box 10362
The Terrace
Wellington 6143

Or email to: temihicallin@mfe.govt.nz

Or fax to: **04 439 7705**

(please mark in the subject line 'Te Mihi Call In')

And send a copy to:

Contact Energy Limited – Te Mihi Power Station

PO Box 10742
Wellington

Or email to: temihi@contact-energy.co.nz

Or fax to: **04 463 9261**



MORE INFORMATION

Phone: 0800 836 444, email: temihicallin@mfe.govt.nz,
or visit www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/call-in-temihi