

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF INQUIRY**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Resource  
Management Act 1991

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of applications for  
resource consent and  
notices of requirement  
by Transpower  
New Zealand Limited  
for the North Island  
Grid Upgrade Project

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF FRANCIS JOHN HALL IN REBUTTAL FOR  
TRANSPOWER NEW ZEALAND LIMITED  
(Agricultural issues)**

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## Introduction

1. **MY** name is Francis John Hall. I wish to present rebuttal evidence to the statements of evidence of:
  - (a) Mr Gary Orbell on behalf of Matamata-Piako District Council (**MPDC**); and
  - (b) Mr Aaron Colliar on behalf of South Waikato District Council (**SWDC**).
2. I address the evidence of each submitter below.

### Mr Gary Orbell (MPDC) (Submission number 1113)

3. I have read the Statement of Evidence of Mr Orbell relating to the impact on high quality soils in the Matamata Piako District. At paragraph 2.2 he states that:

*"Analysis of the designated route indicates that the line traverses major lengths of "high quality" soils/land as designed in the District Plan."*

4. **THE** majority of this high quality soil, is in my view through the eastern part of the district where the soil types are more of a free draining sandy loam origin, as opposed to a clay based origin in the western part of the district, where the proposed transmission line would be located. Clay soils are of a lesser quality, as they generally dry out over summer, and are wetter over winter. It is generally considered that a free draining soil has the potential to grow more pasture.
5. **THE** attached plan (**Appendix "A"**) shows the areas of high quality soils, classes 1 and 2. As can be seen from this plan, the placement of the line largely avoids areas with these soils. Only 9 of the 55 towers in the Matamata-Piako District are located on such soils. However, as discussed below it is possible to farm under towers.
6. I note that Mr Orbell does not specifically comment about the soil types that are under the proposed line and merely provides an overview of the district as a whole.
7. **AT** paragraph 2.5, Mr Orbell is referencing his comments from the New Zealand Land Inventory Land Use Capability Class worksheets, with a focus on the words "high quality" land.

8. I acknowledge that the Matamata Piako District does have a high percentage of high quality soils, which are well suited to a wide range of food production systems. However, I consider that Mr Orbell's calculation of the amount of high quality soils that are affected by the proposed transmission line is overstated. Mr Orbell's calculation is set out in his section 2.5 (third paragraph):

*"A number of the titles affected, are large farms covering land up to 1.5 km to 2.5 km from the centre of the powerline. Using a 2.5 km zone from the centre of the powerline and directly measuring the extent of the various parcels of "high quality" land, (as defined on the Land Inventory Maps) within this zone there is an area of some 10,550 ha of "high quality" land potentially affected. Using a 1.5 km zone, there is an area of some 4,025 ha of "high quality" land potentially affected.'*

9. **IN** my view, there is no basis for either the 1.5 km or 2.5 km zone referred to by Mr Orbell to calculate the high quality soils in the district. As discussed in my evidence in chief, the proposed towers, do not negatively impact on an entire farm. The potential impacts of the towers relate to a much smaller area of land. However, as discussed in my evidence in chief, farming can occur under both the lines and often underneath the towers themselves. Accordingly, I consider that any impact of the proposed line on the high quality soils in the district is, at most, limited to the area underneath the towers.
10. **AT** paragraph 3.1, Mr Orbell discusses a "different Soil Data Base". In particular, the report which is referred to as "*Wilson (Soils of Piako Country, North Island New Zealand. N.Z. Soil Survey Report 39 1980)*". Mr Orbell again uses the 1.5 km and 2.5 km distance as the potential zone of impact. For the reasons given above, I do not consider that the approach taken by Mr Orbell is reasonable or appropriate.

**Mr Collier (SWDC) (Submission number 0799)**

11. **AT** paragraph 4.8 Mr Collier states that "*the issue of effects on soil is a relevant consideration particularly in terms of the effects on farming practices such as the ability to apply fertiliser by air*". Then at paragraph 4.23(iii), he states that the proposal:

*"Will result in significant disruption to people and communities due to the detrimental effects of installation of pylons, constraints on farming activities such as aerial topdressing, placement of fences, gates, preferred routes for mustering stock within farms, and the separation effects of the corridor through farms."*

12. I have addressed these issues in my evidence in chief. Mr Nichol addresses aerial topdressing issues in his evidence.

13. IN paragraph 7.22 of his evidence, Mr Collier states that:

*"...The applicant suggests that the ability for Transpower and its contractors to consult with the landowner and to reach an agreement will be an important part in terms of minimising effects on farming activities. Although the ability to consult may resolve some issues relating to the effects on farming activities, if landowners are unwilling to talk to Transpower I am unable to see how such effects could be minimised."*

14. I acknowledge that some landowners may be unwilling to talk to Transpower, and the ability to provide a solution for any specific impact would be more difficult.

15. **HOWEVER**, based on my involvement with the project and consultation with many other landowners, a wide range of potential impacts on farms have been identified and many such impacts will possibly exist on farms where there has been no consultation. These potential impacts are discussed in my evidence in chief.

16. **AT** paragraph 7.2.2, Mr Collier refers to effects on farms and states that:

*"...These effects include severance effects (such as where dwellings, farm buildings or dairy sheds are separated by the line), restrictions on the use of equipment, and direct effects on land use such as the inability to use or operate aerial topdressing strips and apply fertiliser"*.

17. **THESE** comments appear to be of a general nature, and I have discussed the potential impacts, and mitigation measures earlier in my evidence.

18. **AT** paragraph 7.2.3, Mr Collier refers to a condition of the easement document, and states his understanding that *"...Of some concern is that no houses or work places are able to be placed within the designated area. This definition of workplace is unclear"*. I am aware that there are provisions about what can and cannot be done under lines, such as no burning and no buildings.

19. **HOWEVER**, as discussed in my evidence in chief, many farming activities would continue under the proposed transmission line. I note that Mr Miles' evidence covers the easement agreement and restrictions under the line.

**Francis John Hall**

**13 May 2008**

