

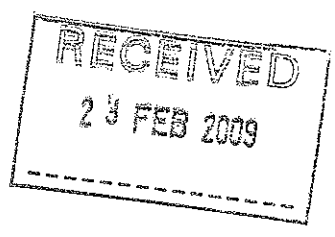
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**TARANAKI / WHANGANUI CONSERVATION BOARD
TE TAI HAU-Ā-URU**

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Freepost Call in
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**Taranaki-Whanganui Conservation Board/Te Tai Hau-A-Uru
Submission
on
Mighty River Power Ltd Applications for Resource Consent (Turitea
Call in)**

1. Introduction

The Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board/Te Tai Hau-A-Uru (the Board) covers a large area in the lower North Island stretch from the Mokau River in the north to the Manawatu River at the southern end of the conservancy. The Manawatu Gorge Scenic area and Palmerston North City lie within the conservancy.

In recent years the Board has received many presentations on aspects of indigenous biodiversity, including the bush remnants and freshwater ecosystems of the Manawatu lowlands. The Board has also been aware of community views about windfarms throughout the conservancy.

Section 6N of the Conservation Act 1977 empowers Conservation Boards to advocate their interests in any public forum or in any statutory planning process. The Taranaki-Whanganui Conservation Board has made submissions on other resource consents for windfarms (most recently the Central Wind project) and is active in making submissions to Taranaki Regional Council and Horizons Regional Council as part of its advocacy of conservation values in relation to biodiversity and landscapes. The Board has visited the site of the proposed windfarm that is the subject of this call in and is grateful to the information provided to it by Mighty River Power on the occasion of that visit in December 2008.

The Board is supportive of renewable energy. However, the Board is concerned that there is considerable community unease about the Turitea site because of the prospect for degradation of the indigenous vegetation and associated ecosystems (including the Turitea stream). In addition to the impacts of the loss of vegetation and degradation of water quality through run-off, the Board notes that there is only

limited knowledge about the potential for successful revegetation of the construction site.

In our submission on the Proposed National Policy Statement on Renewable Electricity Generation, the Board highlighted the need for a greater weighting for conservation values recognising the long-term economic, social and environmental benefits of enhanced indigenous biodiversity. The Board is supportive of PNCC's proposed eco-sanctuary in the Turitea water reserve but is concerned that funding for this should be dependent on the construction of the proposed wind farm.

In addition, as noted above, community concerns about impacts on landscapes that are regionally significant are substantial. Many in the surrounding communities accept and indeed like the turbines that increasingly have proliferated on the skyline ridges but there are also many who consider the landscape to have been, or to be becoming, 'industrialised' with loss of natural character. In such a situation a precautionary approach is required. Landscape values have not often been fully understood and considered in land-use decision-making by statutory bodies.

The Board is concerned that in recent uses of call-in processes, conservation concerns become submerged and overlooked in whole-of-government submissions on major projects. Greater clarity about the criteria that apply to use of call-in processes is needed as well as more consideration of long-term conservation benefits.

The Board wishes to be heard in respect of its submission.

Yours sincerely

Darryn Ratana
Chairperson
Taranaki-Whanganui Conservation Board

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