

21 July 2009

SUBMISSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY GENERATION

Submission To: Board of Inquiry for the Proposed National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation

Submission From: North Shore City Council

1. On 22 June 2008 North Shore City Council appeared before the Board to speak to their written submission concerning the National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation (NPS).
2. The Board requested clarification on a number of matters from North Shore as follows;
 - i. Does the Regional Council's Change 6 or the Auckland Sustainability Framework give any direction as to the methods to be used for promoting solar in an urban area?*
 - ii. At what stage is the work associated with the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act 2004 (LGAAA) and how does this relate to the Supercity initiative?*
 - iii. What would be the expected cost to North Shore City of the plan change required to implement the provisions of the NPS?*
 - iv. Are there land use controls in North Shore City which prevent solar power being installed? If the NPS is introduced, what sort of policy would assist in expediting a move to solar power? If land use controls would not prevent this and no policy is required, please state this also.*
 - v. Did North Shore City make a submission to the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement?*
- i Does the Regional Council's Change 6 or the Auckland Sustainability Framework give any direction as to the methods to be used for promoting solar in an urban area?***
3. The Auckland Regional Council's (ARC) Change 6 deals primarily with the integration of land use and transport. It discusses the benefits of energy efficiency that arise from higher forms of density, including reducing car use and increasing public transport patronage. It does not deal with the benefits of or methods to be used for promoting solar in an urban environment.
4. However the Energy chapter in the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) encourages renewable energy production in the region, "subject to acceptance of their locational factors and environmental impacts" (comment to Issue 5.2.2). This is followed through in policy 2 and Method 6: "Provision should be made in district plans requiring consideration of energy efficiency where that is relevant to consideration of the effects of activities in the consent granting process".

5. The Auckland Sustainability Framework is a non statutory document that has been ratified by all territorial authorities in the region. As the document is non statutory there is no compulsion for Auckland territorial authorities to implement its provisions. It consists not of methods but of strategic responses that will fulfil the goals set out in the Framework. However it does have a number of references to energy and reducing Auckland's ecological footprint. Matters that concern solar include:

- Goal 3: A unique and outstanding environment (p 18). To meet this goal one the strategic responses required is to *"Change production, design and consumption patterns to reduce resource usage and waste"*.
- Goal 7: Resilient infrastructure (p26). To meet this goal, two of the strategic responses required are to *"Increase the focus on demand management for water, energy and transport"*, and to *"Encourage alternatives to large-scale or reticulated infrastructure, where appropriate"*.
- Goal 6: A quality compact urban form (p 24-25). To evaluate the success in achieving this goal, measures include *"Number of new residential dwellings built with solar water heating"* and *"The number of existing residential dwellings retrofitted with insulation, solar water heating, rain water tanks"*.

ii At what stage is the work associated with the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act 2004 (LGAAA) and how does this relate to the Supercity initiative?

6. Change 6 to the RPS attempts to implement the requirements of the LGAAA. It has been appealed by a number of parties and the parties are currently in mediation, attempting to narrow the points of appeal on the urban issues. An environment court hearing is scheduled for the end of 2009 to hear those matters that remain unresolved. The Countryside Living aspects of Change 6 are being resolved separately.

7. The LGAAA impacts upon the RPS existing District Plans within the Auckland region. There is no relationship between the LGAAA and the one District Plan for Auckland that is proposed as part of the new Supercity.

iii. What would be the expected cost to North Shore City of the plan change required to implement the provisions of the NPS?

8. It is difficult to estimate the cost of any particular plan change due to the variable nature of the matters that can influence it as it goes through its life cycle. These variables include;

- The scale of the plan change. For these figures it is assumed that the plan change will be limited to the implementation of that required by Policy 5, as we are unsure what Policy 4 actually requires. We will also assume that the plan change will be limited to objectives, policies and methods concerning household scale solar and wind structures, as there are few opportunities for larger community-scale distributed renewable electricity generation. This will limit the plan change to being a relatively small change.

- The scale of community interest and the number of submissions. For a plan change such as this submissions may vary between those opposed to ‘visual clutter’ on roofs, to those supporting proposals, to those who believe that the plan change does not go far enough in enabling renewable electricity generation.
 - The amount of information provided by MfE to assist territorial authorities with the plan change. For these figures it is assumed that guidelines have been supplied so that the application of the policy is clear and independent research into the types of structures that policy 5 could apply to can be kept to a minimum.
 - Some administrative costs could be shared with the plan change required by the National Policy Statement on Electricity Transmission.
 - Organisational costs such as Committee time are excluded.
 - The possibility of an appeal. Appeal costs and legal costs are excluded. If an appeal were to take place costs would increase significantly.
9. We note that by making these assumptions we are limiting those aspects that have the potential to skew the cost that may be incurred in carrying out the plan change. Hence these figures represent a ‘best case scenario’.

Stage	Details	Hours
Project set up	Establish process options Establish links with other projects (overlaps, timing of consultation, priorities etc) Establish potential stakeholders Estimate size of tasks Gather relevant material Prepare Project Brief	20
Project commencement	Contact, select and brief consultants, if necessary Staff meetings, cross team meetings to confirm direction Communication to stakeholders, consultants if appropriate	20
Initial reporting to Council	Determine project scope, size, preferred/recommended process and timetable Prepare draft report and recommendations Report vetted Attend discussion meeting and complete report/attachments Brief Chair if appropriate, attend Committee meeting Prepare follow up notes of meeting	20
Research and writing (body of project)	Issues and Options paper Drafting proposals, objectives, policies, rules etc Review and revise material	100
Consultation meetings	Set up meetings Prepare materials, agenda Correspondence as appropriate Attend meetings Complete other consultation necessary by written communication	30

Finalise written outputs	Examine results of consultation Revise draft of written material Complete amendments necessary to written material Complete S32 report and other supporting material Draft Plan Change and other notification material	60
Report to Committee recommending notification	Prepare report re consultation, written material, options Brief Chair, attend meeting, respond to questions	20
Notification	Finalise and issue notices, letters, submission forms, copies of document or plan change Prepare information packs for Libraries, Customer Service Centre Prepare and insert newspaper notices	10
Submission processing	Receive, register submissions Prepare summary of submissions Prepare public notices, issue summary to submitters Repeat for further submissions	10
Prepare Hearing report	Prepare report and recommendations on submissions Liaising with fellow staff and other divisions Organise any further specialist reports necessary Finalise material and prepare attachments	100
Hearings	Set up hearing date, time location Select and organise Commissioners Issue notice of hearings, organise schedule of hearing of submitters Attend hearings, collect and file evidence, respond to enquiries as appropriate	20
Decisions	Arrange and attend deliberations with Hearing Committee Prepare Decision Notice as directed by Commissioners Record decisions and reasons Prepare / send Notices of Decisions to all parties	80
		490

Role	Hours / cost per hour	Total
Planners / consultants	490 hours at 100 per hour	49,000
Administrative costs including administrative support time		6,000
Commissioners time (assuming 2 of three Commissioners' are independent)	20 hours each at \$150 per hour	6,000
Total		61,000

10. We note that this is less than the cost of \$150,000 estimated by MfE in the Section 32 report, but we would expect the final cost to exceed this, given the limiting assumptions expressed above.

iv. Are there land use controls in North Shore City which prevent solar power being installed? If the NPS is introduced, what sort of policy would assist in expediting a move to solar power? If land use controls would not prevent this and no policy is required, please state this also.

11. There are no rules relating specifically to solar power in the North Shore City District Plan. The type of rule that may hinder the installation of solar panels are the normal building envelope controls, particularly height and height to boundary controls. Currently there is no exclusion from these rules for solar panels.
12. Heritage zones are one area where streetscape controls may affect the location of solar panels. Alterations to scheduled heritage buildings are also subject to specific controls.
13. In general, utility structures such as solar panels are encouraged to be located in business zones as the expected standard of amenity is lower than in residential zones. Should solar panels be proposed for roofs in business zones, it is unlikely that visual factors would preclude siting there. A recent plan change focusing on urban design in business areas does have an assessment criterion requiring consideration of roof mounted solar devices, and that they be integrated into the overall design of the building.
14. There are few serious obstacles to the location of solar panels in North Shore's District Plan. It is more likely that the cost of solar panels and the Building Code requirements of installing them will hinder their installation. Despite this, North Shore planned to address the issue in our District Plan review scheduled for 2012. This will not take place now and it is likely that solar panels will be addressed in the one Auckland District Plan.
15. In our view it is useful to require territorial authorities to consider solar panels directly and where appropriate, remove barriers to their take up. While we have noted that options other than an NPS are available to encourage this, Policy 5 does achieve this in that, in our opinion, it requires territorial authorities to consider this directly. As we have expressed, our view is that the policy needs to be made clearer, however we support the policy's intent of decreasing potential obstacles to the uptake of solar panels.
16. In summary, given the minor nature of the obstacles posed to the uptake of solar panels by resource management issues, we do not envisage that more specific policies over and above those contained in the proposed NPS are necessary.

v. *Did North Shore City make a submission to the proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement?*

17. North Shore City Council did make a submission to the proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement. A copy is attached to the email accompanying this document.

Correction to oral statement

18. During the oral statement to the Board, we advised that unless a plan change is expected to be finished by 30 June 2010, we would need to get the Auckland Transition Authority's (ATA) signoff for that. This is incorrect.
19. Should there be a Council commitment that is expected to run past 30 June 2011 and that contract will exceed twenty thousand dollars, Council is required to get the consent of the ATA. Also, should the Council wish to make a significant decision (under the terms of the Local Government Act 2002) it will also need the ATA's consent.