



HURUNUI

District Council

MEDIA RELEASE

2 April 2009

COMMISSIONERS SAY NO TO MT CASS WINDFARM

The Hurunui District Council have today received the commissioners' decision declining Mainpower New Zealand's application to build a windfarm along the Mt Cass Ridge.

The application was first lodged with the council in November 2007 and public submissions were accepted from June to August last year. The council appointed independent commissioners to hear and decide the application. The commissioners were environmental lawyer Paul Rogers and resource management specialists Paul Thomas and Dean Chrystal.

A total of 340 submissions were received, and the commissioners spent three weeks during November and December last year doing site visits, listening to expert opinions and to 50 of the submitters who also wished to speak to their submissions.

In reaching their decision, the commissioners identified the Mt Cass limestone ridgeline as an outstanding natural feature of national importance which has significant limestone rock formations, native vegetation and habitats for native fauna. The proposed windfarm footprint would cut a swathe through this area, and the commissioners felt that although Mainpower had proposed several measures to offset the negative effects, that there would still be insufficient protection provided and the resulting impact would be unacceptable.

The commissioners also noted that Mainpower had presented its case to them on the basis of an “all or nothing choice”, leaving them unable to come back with a “fallback position”.

The commissioners did not make their decision lightly, recognising that there were significant potential benefits in terms of the use of renewable sources of energy, climate change, employment, security of electricity supply and diversity of generation of electricity. However, they found that those benefits did not offset the adverse effects to the natural environment.

If Mainpower or any submitter wish to appeal the decision they have 15 days to lodge this with the Environment Court.

Ends.

For further information contact:

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