

Submission on Notified application concerning Resource Consent 240065

Form 13

To: Chief Executive, Central Otago District Council, PO Box 122, Alexandra 9340

Submitter

Name: Susan Helen McKeague

Electronic address for service: susie@mckconsultancy.co.nz

Telephone: 0279 671 858

Postal address: 16 Howard St, Macandrew Bay, Dunedin

This is a submission on Resource Consent application 240065

Applicant: Helios OTA Op LP

Location of Site: 48 Ranfurly-Naseby Rd

Description of Application: Land Use Consent to Construct, Operate and Maintain a Solar Farm being a Renewable Electricity Generation Activity in a Rural Resource Area.

The specific parts of the application that my submission relates to are:

1. The proposal in general and alignment with national and regional objectives to increase Otago and New Zealand's renewable energy supply.
2. The diversification of income and employment options in rural Otago
3. The minor effects of the proposal.

The submission

A. Renewable Energy

Establishing new and maintaining existing renewable energy sources have been identified as important priorities in both regional and national policy documents. The Otago Regional Policy Statement 2021, the most recent policy document capturing the vision for Otago and its people supports and encourages the expansion of renewable energy. This Policy Statement went to a hearing in 2023 and the renewable energy priorities remain. This proposal delivers to these policies.

As copied below:

EIT-EN-P2 – Recognising renewable electricity generation activities in decision making

Decisions on the allocation and use of *natural and physical* resources, including the use of *fresh water* and development of *land*:

- (1) recognise the national significance of renewable electricity generation activities, including the national, regional and local benefits of renewable electricity generation activities,
- (2) have particular regard to the maintenance of current renewable electricity generation capacity, and
- (3) recognise that the attainment of increases in renewable electricity generation capacity will require significant development of renewable electricity generation activities.

EIT-EN-P3 –The security of renewable electricity generation supply

The security and installed capacity of renewable electricity supply is maintained or improved in Otago through appropriate provision for the development or upgrading of renewable electricity generation activities and diversification of the type or location of renewable electricity generation activities.

EIT-EN-P4 – Identifying new sites or resources

Provide for activities associated with the investigation, identification and assessment of potential sites and energy sources for renewable electricity generation.

The National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Generation sets targets for increased renewable energy sources for the country. This project is about delivering to those goals. We must reduce our reliance on non renewable energy and green house gas contributing generation.

Solar generation is a natural seasonal balance to hydro. In the hot dry summers when the water sources are starting to be depleted the solar energy opportunities are plentiful.

Farming to continue

The land being utilised for solar production is of lower production than the irrigated paddocks in the Maniatoto. This is a hot and dry climate in summer where the soils are routinely in water deficit during summer. The paddocks being used for solar do not have a high production value however they are not lost to grazing altogether at any rate.

B. Diversification

It is clear to most sheep and beef farmers that diversification is required if those businesses and by default the small communities they support are to survive. The economic returns from meat sector are tight and most farmers are looking for other opportunities. Cropping is a viable option for some while others are looking at forestry. Solar farming allows for the continued grazing while also generating electricity.

Water quality and green house gas modelling done recently is also showing that sheep and beef farming will need to change if our water quality or green house gas limits are to be achieved. Farmers need to think laterally about options and this proposal is exactly that.

C. Minor Effects

The application and the Section 95 report have identified that the effects of the farm once operational and with the established shelter belts trees are less than minor. It is just the short term effects that are not less than minor. Many projects have a period of disturbance that are short term and tolerated because the medium to long term outcome is aligned with policy and has is of benefit to the many aspects of the RMA.

I seek that this proposal be consented and the Solar Farm is able to be constructed as described in the application.

I wish to be heard in support of this submission.

I am not a trade competitor for the purpose of section 308B of the Resource Management Act 1991.

I would consider presenting a joint case if others make a similar submission.

Signed



Date

16-12-24