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Media Release

MainPower appeals Mt Cass wind farm decision

MainPower has appealed to the Environment Court over its proposed Mt Cass Wind Farm. A resource consent application for the project was declined earlier this month by the Hurunui District Council.

Managing Director Allan Berge said MainPower had carefully considered the decision and believed it had strong grounds for an appeal.

He also said MainPower believed there was very strong support for the Mt Cass wind farm in North Canterbury.

“This is emphasised by an analysis of submissions on the resource consent application, with a very significant majority supporting it. It is interesting to note that a large percentage of opposing submissions were from people living outside North Canterbury.

“We have also had a lot of encouragement from the local community to appeal the decision.”

He said the Commissioners considering the consent application had made a number of very positive determinations, including that the visual impacts of the wind farm were acceptable, that noise effects would not be significant and that it was unlikely there would be adverse effects on recreation and tourism.

However, in declining the application the Commissioners had disregarded many of the benefits of the conservation work that MainPower had proposed to address the environmental impacts of the wind farm, Mr Berge said.

He said MainPower would obviously prefer not to have to go to the Environment Court, but it had always expected this was a possibility given the strong views some people developed on major projects, and because of the complexity of the issues.

MainPower was committed to the project because it would be a significant step towards making the region energy self-sufficient. It would use the regions renewable energy resources, and would make a strong contribution to the local economy.

“In addition, increased generation capacity and diversity of supply are critical to New Zealand meeting its current and future energy requirements.”

Ends

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About Mt Cass

Mt Cass is a prominent hill 6 km east of Waipara. The proposal was for wind farm to be situated on 6.5 km of ridge running north-east from the summit of Mt Cass.

MainPower's "design envelope" approach means it had sought resource consent for a flexible turbine configuration – between 26 turbines with a 125 metre height and 83 turbines with a 47 metre height – to allow it to access the best technical and commercial option.

The Mt Cass wind farm could generate enough energy for 11,000 to 24,000 homes – enough for all the households in the Hurunui and Waimakariri districts. For further information see www.localgeneration.co.nz.

About MainPower

MainPower owns and operates the power lines used to supply electricity to the people and businesses of North Canterbury and Kaikoura. We service every household, farm, business and community organisation in the region.

We have been part of the local community since 1928, starting our life as the North Canterbury Electric Power Board. We are one of the largest employers in the region and a proud member of the local community.

We are owned by the MainPower Trust on behalf of the community. Our profits go back to the community through a monthly power bill rebate - in the past financial year this rebate totalled \$7.6 million.

Our vision is to contribute to the local community by being a leading electricity and energy business.