

WELLINGTON REGISTRY

ENV-WLG-2024-001

TE WHANGANUI-A-TARA ROHE

In the Environment Court

I Mua I Te Koti Taiao O Aotearoa

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

And in the matter of the direct referral of an application for resource consents by Meridian Energy Limited in respect of the proposed Mt Munro wind farm under section 87G of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA).

Meridian Energy Limited

Applicant

And

Tararua District Council, Masterton District Council, Manawatu-Whanganui Regional Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council (Councils).

Consent Authorities

And

S274 Parties

Statement of Evidence of *Robin Olliver*

10 July 2024

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My name is Robin Olliver. I was born and raised in Eketahuna. I am not a professional expert, but because I have worked in the Hastwell area for almost forty years and because my partner Charmaine and myself have lived at 18 Smiths Lane in the village of Hastwell for more than thirty five years we feel we are both very much local experts.

We have brought all of our seven children up out here. They and our many grandchildren spend a large amount of time out here with us. We have many family functions and family gatherings here at our family home. The reason we have these gatherings etc here is the same reason we originally settled here. The peace and quiet, the incredible natural surroundings and of course the view of our beautiful Mount Munro.

Our children and grandchildren have and still do spend much of their time as kids playing and fishing in the creeks and waterways for tuna and kura.

They have always done well but these days catch and release. All of these waterways come off Mount Munro. We grow most of our own fruit and vegetables much of which goes out to our family. We catch our drinking water on our rooves to holding tanks, therefore relying on clean air for this supply. We have planted many native trees on our property, and there are many large blocks of native bush on the side of our mountain as well as in the surrounding area. This has brought in a large number of native birds. Some of which feed and rest on our property. We love it here. It is as close to being the perfect location for us as we could possibly get.

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All this is now in jeopardy with the proposed destruction of our beautiful Mount Munro, with twenty massive turbines, more than half the height of the mountain itself, to be placed along the entire spine of our mountain.

Dust:

The highest point of Mount Munro is just under 300 metres above our property and we are 800 metres directly down wind of the prevailing north west wind from the proposed construction site. In their proposal Meridian's facts and figures on airborne dust and toxic particles such as cement dust, rubber dust from many trucks and trailers and diesel fumes etc, are far from accurate. If they were to be used the effect would almost certainly be ~~contamin~~ contamination of our roof collected rain water for drinking. Also contaminating our fruit trees vegetable garden and our dogs drinking water etc. The health of us, all our family and our dogs may well be put at risk with such pollutants in our clean country air. As my partner already has respiratory and serious cardio issues the possibility of these pollutants being in our air is of great concern.

Visual:

At 165 metres high it will be impossible to hide or beautify or mitigate in anyway the site or continual nuisance noise coming from these extremely intrusive monsters. I work causally on the farm which surrounds our property. Nowhere on the farm would I be able to not see or hear the turbines. They will be very obvious from everywhere I go out here. My partner spends little time inside our house. She is an avid gardener and walks

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Visual Cont: From page 2.

our dogs on the local roads most days. She to will be unable to be out of view or earshot of these monsters where ever she goes. They will be visible and audible from everywhere in the entire Hastings district and much much further. With a large part of Eketahuna township being only 3kms from the proposed site, not 5kms or 8kms from the site as Meridian keep suggesting, they to will be affected visually keeping in mind the turbines are more than half the height of the mountains.

My partner and I were riding past wind farm in the Hawkes Bay some months ago. It was around early to mid morning. We noticed bright flashing or glinting coming from the tops of the turbine towers as the sun was hitting them. It was very bright almost mirror like. When we turned towards them it was similar to sun strike. We now have noticed the new turbines to the west of Woodville appear to be the same. Is this the future for our mornings? Glint from the blades in the sun and now mirror like flashes reflecting down all through our valley.

As for our afternoons. The sun sets behind our mountain every day of the year. With the mountain being 300 metres above us, then another 165 metres of the turbine height we will have shadow flicker from early afternoon every day of the year. The energy industry has a shadow flicker limit of under 30 hours per year. We will reach the 29 hour limit in less than 2 months.

Recently my partner and I rode home in the dark from Palmerston North over the Pahiatua track where there are several turbines located. On many corners on the way down.

Visual Cont from 3.

the eastern side we were struck visually by very bright red lights flashing in our eyes. It was similar to a speed camera flash but flashing on and off. Very disorientating and dangerous. Especially for bike/motorbike riders. These bright red lights are the aviation lights on top of the turbine towers. These flash on and off 40 to 60 times a minute. These towers also have red lights around half the way down. These lights lower down remain on all the time. The blades will pass in front of these lower lights so they will appear to be flashing on and off also. These lights were so bright in the dark they lit up the entire tower and the surroundings including the road. According to Meridian's proposal these lights are dull and low intensity and are upward pointing.

They may be upward pointing but that is the only thing about these lights Meridian has right. We believe these aviation lights will light up our entire valley at night. With them flashing so rapidly, so bright and with being so close it will be extremely unnatural, distracting and disorientating for man and beast. The lower aviation lights part way down the turbine towers which remain on 24hrs per day are brighter than Meridian would have us believe. On the many very dull and or foggy days we have here at Hastwell these lower lights will be very visible. Putting an unnatural reddish glow on the surroundings as it does with the turbines on the Rairarua track.

Matariki has just passed and are lucky enough to be able to see the constellation from our porch and lounge and are fortunate to be able to lay in bed and watch it slowly set behind our beautiful mountain. The effect of all these

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Visual Cont from page 4

Flashing red upward pointing lights, (keeping in mind how high the turbines and the mountain are,) we will no longer be able to see Makariki or any stars at all ever again. The wind farm site is right on the edge of a recognized dark sky reserve. These continually flashing intrusive red aviation lights may very well affect this as well. Because of all these issues we may well be facing some kind of flash, glint, flicker or bright flashing red light in our view where ever we are 24 hrs per day. The effect of these issues, because they would be so distracting, could be it may become difficult or dangerous to carry out many of our normal daily duties. The constant flashing and blinking of the red aviation lights will undoubtedly effect our sleeping patterns. Meridian suggest that this can be remedy by simply by drawing our curtains. In fact Meridian suggests all our visual issues with this project can be remedy by "putting the BBQ table around the other side of the house!!" or just simply turn our backs and face the other way. REALLY? And what would Meridian suggest we do about the constant and intrusive noise from these monsters? EARPLUGS??

Rainfall

The rainfall figures for the construction site in Meridian's proposal are highly inaccurate. All the waterways coming from Mount Maori flow into either the Makakahi River or the Kopouranga stream. Both of which are brown trout spawning areas. Should these figures be used on this project the affect on all these waterways would likely be catastrophic. In turn greatly risking the future of the tuna,

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Rainfall Cont from pg 5.

Kura and the brown trout therein. Where do our grandchildren and great grandchildren go to enjoy doing what generations of country kids have done for years, if this happens.

Communication.

On Meridians public website and in their public reports and press releases etc they put huge emphasis on the people. "The people are the most important part of all their projects. The host community always come first and given full consideration. They say many things like this. Meridian have refused to recognize Hastwell as the host community despite the fact that there are 31 homes within 2km of the proposed windfarm. These 31 homes are home to approximately 75 to 90 people. That is a large of people affected for Meridian not to recognize. Another fact is the Hastwell district is fully subdivided and has been for a very long time. It is a fact that this subdivision is a village with several of those sections being sold in recent years with houses popping up throughout. Regardless Meridian refuse to recognize any of these facts. We are not a village or a community as far as Meridian are concerned.

Meridian continue to say Eketahuna is the host community which is according to Meridian five kms away, or sometimes 8kms away depending on which part of Meridians proposal you read. In fact the centre of Eketahuna township is 3.5kms from the wind farm site.

If the people are so important to Meridian why is it, considering this project has been going on since 2011, we have never been

Comuncation Cont. page 6.

directly contacted by Meridian until 5 weeks ago. That contact was by letter informing us that our home at 18 Smiths Lane is one of the "FOUR"!!?? properties which will be the most seriously affected by this poorly presented project. That's 12 years it has taken them to inform us of something as vitally important as that. This is a long long way from good communication, which may I add is another thing Meridian boast is at the heart of their projects. It is also a very very poor example of them "Putting the people first."

Earthquake

Back in 2016 Eketahuna had quite a large earthquake 6.7 on the scale. When it struck my partner and I were out in the garden. The quake was so severe we could not stand. We had to drop to our knees on the ground. We watched our chimney collapse to the roof.

It pushed our built in fireplace out and damaged many appliances etc. It flipped our very heavy motorcycle on to its side. The quake opened up cracks in the roads all through out the Eketahuna district including out here at Hastwell.

According to recent studies carried out in the district by the appropriate authorities they have discovered three previously unknown possible fault lines. One of which runs directly under the projects proposed substation site on the corner of state highway 2 and Kaipororo Road. Despite all this Meridian have refused to carry out any seismic studies.

Construction + Noise.

The construction of these monstrosities involves a huge number of trucks with trailers coming and going onto the construction site. Dumping

Construction and Noise Cont. From page 7.

gravel and bringing equipment etc. A large amount of heavy machinery. A rock crusher. A cement batching plant and much more. All these things are notoriously loud. Taking into consideration our location the ten to twelve hours per day, seven days per week, for who knows how long, (Meridian don't know), construction will create many unnatural none rural noises at vary levels.

Apart from the dust and toxins which I touched on earlier we have recently discovered that there will be a large amount of explosive blasting to be undertaken on the construction site.

We feel the effect of this unnatural very loud industrial noise for such long periods of time will be detrimental to ours and our families and pets health and lifestyle. Our frequent functions and gatherings and general family life will always be over powered by the continuous industrial and intrusive noise.

Meridian suggest we will get use to the noise, and eventually get over it. I struggle to see how Meridian could come to this conclusion considering they have not done and refuse to do a social impact study.

Heritage:

Hastwell and surrounding areas are deep with history. Settled by mainly by the Norwegians people with a few Scots and Irish thrown in. Some of those original families are still here. There are also many people in our community who have ties to those settler families including my self. My grandmother was born on North Road only three or four kms from our home.

My partner Charmaine is Ngati Kahumunu. She was born in Wairarapa but moved down here to the Southern end of her tribal land some forty years ago.

Heritage Cont From page 8.

This is when we met. Once together we decided to buy a house. We were determined to be sure what we bought was absolutely what we wanted. We found that at 48 Smiths Lane in the village of Hastwell it was a run down little cottage in a swampy corner of an equally run down section. We fell in love with this rough little place immediately. We could see the huge potential after much sweat and toil, a handsome amount of money and 35 years later we have our dream home for us and all our family.

Charmaine quite rightly considers Mount Munro to be her mountain with her rivers. This is how all the Hastwell community feel. Most of us consider the defileing of our mountain to be obscene and insulting as does Charmaine.

Meridian have shown no regard for any of our fascinating history or heritage which is a huge part of who we are. This district is our home.

Old Coach Rd. North.

Meridian propose to use old coach road north as their access to the wind farm site. This is an extremely historical road it is one of the few original settler roads in AOTEAROA still in use. This is by far not the best way into the site by any means. Old coach Road north is a narrow one lane gravel road. The entrance into the road from state highway 2 is very procerious. It is right on the brow of a hill. The road would have to be widen dramatically to be able to handle seven hundred heavy vehicles per day at two lanes wide. There a seven seperate landowners along old coach road north. Meridian will have to negotiate with all these landowners

Old Coach Road North Cont from page 9.

to either lease or purchase land to be able to achieve the road modification they need. There are six dwellings along old Coach road North. Some of which are very close to the edge of the existing road. One of these is a very historical treasure this 1880's bush cottage which is lived in by a very historic ninety year old gentleman who has lived there for over sixty years.

Meridian will have to negotiate some form of mitigation for all these people which would be extremely difficult. Old coach road north is approximately 1.5 kms long and about two thirds of the way in they will need to construct a reasonable size bridge.

Very Costly.

All of these activities will be extreme intrusive, inconvenient and dangerous for all the residents of old coach road north. If this project goes ahead using old coach road north all services for those residents such as mail delivery, medical services and school bus etc will stop.

There is however an alternative access route Meridian could use. At the southern end of the Wind Farm host property is old coach road SOUTH. This is the same historic road but several kilometres in the centre of the original road have been out of use for many many years. Access into Old Coach Road South is off a side road Opaki - Kaipararo Road.

Access from state highway 2 is easy and safe. Old Coach Road South is also a narrow gravel road but all the land on both sides of the road is owned by the Wind Farm host land owners.

There are only two dwellings on Old Coach Road South and they too are owned by the host landowners. Old Coach Road South is only 700

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Old Coach Road North Cont: page 10.

metres long. On top of the host farm there is a fertilizer bin and airstrip. This is in the middle of the proposed wind farm site. Heavy vehicles have been taking fertilizer up there for years. All these heavy vehicles come in from Old Coach Road South. As do all the heavy vehicles and trailers which deliver and pick up goods and stock from the host farm.

The road is truck and trailer capable and the track is truck capable. It would take very little, in comparison, to make this track to the top trailer capable as well. Old Coach Road South is not serviced by council or mail delivery or any other form of servicing. Which makes this option of Old Coach Road South much much safer than Meridion's preferred option of Old Coach Road North. All of this is fact and Meridion need to seriously consider this alternative.

Detail and Timelines

This paper is a summary of facts. It has been very difficult to find facts to put up against Meridion's proposal because it is so severely lacking in any detail. As it was for our submissions, Meridion's detail is so vague it was and is extremely difficult to put up an informed argument for example the construction time we were told some 12 months back, would be 18 months to 3 years. A few months later we were told it could be 5 or 50 years. We also recently discovered Meridion have a 3 month lay off period every year. Then, because they need 10 straight days of near perfect weather to achieve many of the tasks to be done this will add even more time to the construction period.

It is very very rare to get 10 straight days of fine weather on top of Mount Munro. Adding to this

Detail and Timelines Cont. page 11

Meridian have requested a ten year start time. If they achieve this this project proposal will have been in the works for 22 years. A huge amount of Meridian's proposal is very vague like this.

"It could be this or it could be that or it could be the other." It puts us on the back foot and in the dark.

Health and Wellbeing

When this nightmare came knocking on our door some 18 months ago I was a strapping 97kg. Fit healthy and strong as a bull. I now weigh 83kg and in the last 12 months have been in hospital 3 times. After many appointments and test in hospital and with my G.P. they can find no obvious reasons for what is happening. After discussion they agree that it is probably stress related. They also agree with me that this cursed wind farm project is enough of a stress for us to be affecting my health in this way.

My partner Charmaine has a serious cardiac issue which led to her having to have a pacemaker-defibrillator implanted in her chest. This implant picks up, prevents and records any episode her heart may have. The cardiologists take readings from her implant every six months. Her last 2 readings have indicated a significant increase in the number of episodes she has had in the last 12 months.

The cardiologist has agreed that this could well be because of stress. All our family are very worried about us both. They have told us they have seen the obvious effects this mess has had on us both. In particular they tell me that it has taken quite a visible toll on me. Our grandchildren ask me how come you are so skinny now Papa. It is a fact that our entire family places the blame for our current health issues solely at

Health and Wellbeing Cont page 12.

The feet of Meridian and this project. As for our mental health. This nightmare has taken over our lives I have little time for anything but this cursed project. It is always in my head. When I have conversations with friends and extended family somehow the topic always ends up being this project. They are getting rather tired of this so now we don't see them as much. When I can't sleep, which is quite often these days, this project is all I can think about. When I can sleep it is always a broken sleep. I wake up often and when I do again this project jumps straight into my head. This intern is affecting my partners sleep quite dramatically. I keep telling Charmaine "this is doing my head in". She is so worried.

In conclusion:

I repeat we are not professional experts but we have lived played and worked in Haswell long enough to know how pretty much everything works out here. From knowing seasonal waterway levels and their populations to knowing what the weather will probably be tomorrow by looking at the conditions on Mount Munro. Therefore we know its a fact that Mount Munro dictates a majority of our weather and our climate. Which intern makes our valley and entire district what it is. From grass growth to waterway condition. Micro climates do exist and every person who has made either side of our mountain there home lives in one. If this project is consented Meridian intend to tear open the belly of our beautiful mountain. Dig massive holes into its heart and then deface its spine with 30 monstrosities. The fact is the effect of this carnage will be everlasting. On our mountain,

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on our valley and on our way of life. Dispite Meridian tell us that "We will get over it," it will have a massive and everlasting effect on us and our family. As it will on every resident of our beloved Horstwell. We also believe that such a dramatic and unnatural change to Mount Munro may well change our valleys weather and climate in some way. One fact about this is that Meridian certainly dont know. If this project is consented nothing will ever be the same again. EACI

Thank you.

Robin Oliver + Charmayne Semmens.

