

News Release

Waipa District Council

1 February 2007

Commission Decision Disappointing: Waipa Council

Statement made by Waipa District Council Mayor, Alan Livingston

It is disappointing that the Electricity Commission has taken the draft decision to approve Transpower's proposed 400kV pylon route.

While details of the draft decision are not yet available, it is clear that the Commission has not considered the environmental impacts, leaving these for consideration under the Resource Management Act process.

The proposed line passes close to Maungatautari Ecological Island and across Lake Karapiro. Both are designated as outstanding landscape areas in the Waipa District Plan. Outstanding landscape areas are protected under the requirements of the Resource Management Act and are nationally and internationally recognised as unique and precious natural assets.

Developed in consultation with Transpower, Waipa's District Plan specifically states that the maximum permitted height for pylons is 25 metres while the proposed lines will be up to 70 metres. The Plan also states the permitted activity is restricted to lines with a voltage no greater than 110 kilovolts.

Waipa District Council, while supportive of an improvement to the national grid, cannot support a decision that will visibly mar our protected environmental assets, and flaunts Waipa's District Plan and the RMA., especially when there are alternatives available which have far less impact on the Environment.

Transpower has tabled other route options for its pylons, and it is difficult to understand why it has made this its first choice.

Whilst it is clear that there is a need for an improved electricity network, this should not be achieved at the expense of New Zealand's outstanding landscape.

Waipa District Council considers that Transpower is adopting a high risk strategy by seeking to erect large pylons through the special landscape character area and has resolved to challenge Transpower through the RMA process.

Ends

For more information, contact Mayor Alan Livingston, 07 872 0030.