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Committee       Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee  
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## Water Board Functions Bill

### 1. Purpose

To obtain the Council's approval to proceed with a Bill that will provide the option of constructing wind turbines on land held for water supply purposes. Also, to provide an update on the potential use of water supply land for wind generation.

### 2. Background

In May, the Council approved the drafting of a Bill so that wind generation could take place on land designated for water catchment or forestry purposes (Report 03.224). Once drafted, the Bill was to be referred back to the Council together with an update on potential water catchment or forestry sites. Most water supply and non-Wairarapa exotic forestry land sits within the auspices of the Wellington Regional Water Board Act 1972 (WRWBA).

### 3. Water Board Bill

It was originally proposed that the Bill would effectively be an amendment to the WRWBA. However, following discussions between the Council's legal advisors and Parliamentary Counsel, there is now a preference for a new 'Act'. **Attachment 1** is the proposed "Wellington Regional Council (Water Board Functions) Bill". If it becomes an Act, it would sit alongside the WRWBA. From the Council's point of view, the result will be the same as was originally suggested in Report 03.224 (**Attachment 2**).

The main points of the Bill are:

- Any electrical works can be constructed on land held under the WRWBA. Electrical works are defined in the Electricity Act 1992 and have a wide scope.
- The Council can grant easements licences or permits for electrical works without the time constraints of the WRWBA.

- Before allowing any electrical works, the Council has to be satisfied the works will not impede any future water supply activities. The Council though is free to give preference to electricity works over exotic forestry.
- There is full flexibility as to who carries out the electrical works.
- The Act would not affect the provisions in the Resource Management Act 1991.

It is important to note that the Bill simply provides the Council with the option of allowing wind turbines but does not direct Council towards any specific decision. Any decision to allow (or not allow) wind turbines will be site specific, and will take into account a range of factors including the economics of any proposal as well as any environmental effects.

#### **4. Next steps**

These are set out in **Attachment 2** of report 03.224. Initially there is a notification process and once this is completed, the relevant documents are forwarded to the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives.

By convention, an electorate Member of Parliament for the area concerned is asked to take charge of the Bill through the Parliamentary process. In this case, the land areas are across several electorates and the Regional Council Centre is within Wellington City.

#### **5. Wind generation update**

An update of potential sites on “WRWBA” land is as follows:

##### **Mt Climie**

An agreement was reached with BCL to allow wind recording equipment to be installed on top of the BCL Mt Climie communications tower. The equipment was installed on 25 August. It will be a few months before there is an indication of the quality of the wind resource. No other investigation work has been carried out for this site.

##### **Puketiro**

A resource consent has been applied for to erect a 20 metre high tubular mast. Given the location and the distance from the neighbouring forested properties, it is expected that the consent will be non-notified. The mast and monitoring equipment have been ordered and should be delivered about mid October. Work has started on investigating the best access to the site.

##### **Te Marua**

A site has been identified that is relatively close to the Te Marua water treatment plant. A desktop exercise is underway to see if the wind resource is likely to be sufficient to warrant further investigations.

## **Other sites**

Some ridges in the forestry area have been identified as possible areas for development but access may prove difficult. These sites will be evaluated in due course.

## **Belmont**

For the sake of completeness, the Belmont site has been included although it does not fit within the WRWBA land holdings.

An application has been made for a resource consent for an anemometer mast. Once this is received, tenders will be called for the mast construction and foundations. The earliest wind recordings will started is January 2004. Secondary recording instruments at the Belmont site are being arranged and should be in place before the end of the year.

Work on other issues, such as roading, is continuing with the city councils and other groups. A number of other studies will be commissioned as part of the overall assessment.

## **6. Finance**

The approved budget for 2003/4 is adequate for this year's investigation work. However, in some instances, investigations have shown it will be preferable to purchase wind recording equipment rather than lease it. This is because the pay back period on lease rates is 12 to 18 months. Most equipment will be in use at each site for two years or will be relocated. This means it is better to substitute capital expenditure for operating expenditure to produce benefits in the 2004/5 financial year. Details of the shift from operating expenditure to capital expenditure will be confirmed at the half yearly review.

## 7. Recommendations

*It is recommended that the Committee:*

1. *receive the report.*
2. *note its contents.*
3. *recommend to Council that:*
  - (i) *the Draft “Wellington Regional Council Water Board Functions Bill” proceeds*
  - (ii) *a local electorate Member of Parliament is asked to take charge of the Bill through the Parliamentary process.*

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**Attachment 1:** Proposed “Wellington Regional Council (Water Board Functions) Bill”

**Attachment 2:** Report 03.224