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18 APR 2008

**SUBMISSION ON A RESOURCE CONSENT APPLICATION  
SECTIONS 93(2) & 96 OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991**



To: Buller District Council  
C/- West Coast Regional Council  
PO Box 66  
Greymouth

Copy to: Meridian Energy Limited  
PO Box 2454  
Christchurch

**APPLICANT:** MERIDIAN ENERGY LTD

**Closing date for submissions is Wednesday, 23 April 2008**

**Submitter Details**

Name: ZELKA GRAMMER + FAMILY  
& TIM VALLINGS (full name)

Address: BINT ROAD RD 8 MAUNGAKARAMEA  
(full postal address)  
WHANGAREI, NORTHLAND

Correspondence to be sent to the following name and address: (if different to above)  
SAME

Phone No: 09 4322155

Fax No: —

Email: zlg @ xnet.co.nz

I/we **support** the application numbers ticketed on the back of this form

(tick one)

I/we **oppose** the application numbers ticketed on the back of this form

My/our submission is that: WE OPPOSE THE PROPOSAL BY MERIDIAN ENERGY  
(state in summary the nature of your submission. Clearly indicate whether you support or oppose  
IN ITS ENTIRETY  
the specific proposal, or wish to have amendments made, giving reasons)

SEE ATTACHED  
(ENCLOSED)

I/we seek the following decision from the Local Authority: WE SEEK THE  
(give precise details)

LOCAL AUTHORITY TO DECLINE ALL THE  
RESOURCE CONSENT APPLICATIONS

Use the tick boxes to indicate the resource consent application(s) your submission concerns.  
Write a clear tick in the appropriate box(es).

I/we make my/our submission concerning **all** the consent applications listed below   
My/our submission **only** concerns the consent applications ticked below

I/we **wish to be heard** in support of my/our submission.   
I/we **DO NOT wish to be heard** and hereby make my/our submission in writing only.

Bethan Grammer  
(signature(s) of person making submission)

15 April 2008  
(Date)

Tim Vallings TIM VALLINGS  
(If this is a joint submission by 2 or more individuals, each individual's signature is required)

I/we **have** served a copy of my/our submission on Meridian Energy Ltd as per Section 96(4) of the RMA

Consent list: ALL OF below

- RC07/180-A Land use activities associated with Dam, Staging Area & Associated Infrastructure
- RC07/180-B Land use activities associated with the Inundation Area
- RC07/180-C Land use activities associated with the Walking track
- RC07/180-D Land use activities associated with the Dam Access Road & Power Supply
- RC07/180-E Land use activities associated with Transmission Poles/Lines, Substation & Access Tracks
- RC07/180-F Land use activities associated with the Boat ramp/jetty
- RC07/180-G Land use activities associated with the Log Boom
- RC07/180-H Land use activities associated with the Use and Storage of Hazardous Substances

15 April 2008

Submission to:

Buller District Council  
c/o West coast Regional Council  
PO Box 66  
Greymouth  
South Island

Re: Meridian Energy application to dam the Mokihinui River

Submission by: Mrs. Z Grammer & family

Contact details:

Z Grammer  
Bint Road RD 8 Maungakaramea  
Whangarei  
Northland

Tel. 09 4322155

email: [zlg@xnet.co.nz](mailto:zlg@xnet.co.nz)

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Our farming family strongly opposes the application by Meridian Energy to dam the wild and scenic Mokihinui River, which would flood 330 hectares of this unique forest-clad river gorge.

We are extremely concerned to hear that Meridian Energy has applied to local authorities on the West Coast to dam the wild Mokihinui River, despite its high biodiversity and recreational value: The river is also located in a geologically unstable area, unsuitable for a dam.

We understand that the dam proposal is for a dam 85 metres high and which will flood 12 kilometres of pristine gorge – habitat for 16 endangered bird, snail, bat and fish species.

We note that the Mokihinui is ranked New Zealand's seventh most important river for its natural values and its whole catchment is considered nationally important for biodiversity.

We urge you to decline this application in its entirety, which would set a dangerous precedent.

We support the request by West Coast councils for the Environment Minister to "call in" Meridian's resource consent application to build a hydro dam on the Mokihinui River.

We understand that Buller District Council and West Coast Regional Council have both asked Environment Minister Trevor Mallard to use his power to "call in" the application.

Region and part of the lower river gorge is on the northern edge of the Ngakawau Ecological District in the North Westland Ecological Region.

-adverse impacts on fishing/whitebaiting (important source of food and income for West Coasters including tangata whenua). The West Coast Whitebaiters Association say they intend to oppose the dam "due to the dominant whitebait species caught 'koaro' spawning in the area of the dam site."

- The change in the daily flow downriver of the proposed Mokihinui dam will be very disruptive to the ecology of the river, and also for local and other recreationists, and this would have to be considered a major change in river dynamics. The suppression of freshes in the river will also be highly detrimental to the river ecology downstream of the dam

- because the dam and reservoir will be very unnatural features, and because the Mokihinui gorge is unique in size in the region, the effect of the MHP in respect of geomorphology must be major.

The **NZ Energy Strategy** emphasizes providing enough energy for NZ's growing needs whilst reducing greenhouse gases. Conservation and reduction for power requirements should also be considered and implemented to prevent our precious and unique indigenous ecosystem being sequentially harnessed into hydro-electric schemes.

The **NZ Coastal Policy Statement**, chapter 1, emphasizes the need to protect and preserve the natural character and integrity of coastal areas, and chapter 3 emphasizes the need to avoid and mitigate the effects of natural hazards. Meridian agrees that the MHP will accelerate local coastal erosion, to the possible extent of 75m of erosion, predominantly in about 20 years, and also the straightening out of the shoreline from Mussel Rocks (Nikau) to the Gentle Annie Point.

We urge you to decline the application in its entirety and take steps to:

- Protect the Mokihinui Gorge and river
- Retain the 'stewardship land' and consider the Mokihinui Gorge for higher protected status given its obvious ecological values.

We would like to see the boundaries of Kahurangi National Park to be extended south to include the Mokihinui catchment and protect it from future hydro development or mining.

- Decline any request by Meridian Energy for a concession to remove old growth forest and flood the gorge.
- Decline the application to run the transmission line across conservation land and especially through the Ngakawau Ecological Area and the Recommended Areas for Protection on the Stockton Plateau.

We understand that under the Resource Management Act the Minister can “call in” an application for resource consent for a number of reasons, including widespread public concern and likely effects on a place of national significance.

In our view, the Mokihinui River application is eligible to be called in on the grounds of high national importance. As you can tell by our contact details, we live near Whangarei in Northland. However, we make regular trips to the West Coast of the South Island, because of friends who live in the area and the amazing tramping and kayacking and indigenous wildlife.

Mokihinui River gorge is home to more than 16 threatened native bird and fish species, including the elusive blue duck (whio). All of these species are in danger from habitat loss and predation. The whio is one of our favourite species- loss of this precious habitat for this endangered duck is totally unacceptable to us.

The Mokihinui River gorge provides an enclave for these species amid a canopy of ancient rimu and beech forest. If Meridian’s proposal went ahead, a 330-hectare lake would drown this precious habitat.

The Government’s own list of rivers of national significance ranks the Mokihinui 7<sup>th</sup> in New Zealand for its natural values. The minister would easily be satisfied that this is a matter for national concern and scrutiny.

If the minister does decide to call it in we would strongly urge that the local community, river users and those with wider concerns about protecting New Zealand’s declining biodiversity have the opportunity to have input into the process.

The reason for our submission is due to our concerns about:

- adverse ecological impacts

- adverse impacts on endangered species including whio, Great spotted Kiwi

- adverse recreational effects (loss of historic tramping “pack track”, flooding of historical Maori route via Rough & Tumble River, and kayacking ventures)

- safety issues (that put at risk those that live on the lower Mokihinui) due to the geological instability of the area

- loss of public access (historic tramping “pack track”)

- effects on the purity and biodiversity values of the river

- adverse landscape/visual effects

- loss of wilderness

- adverse impacts on the ecological setting- ie. Most of the Mokihinui River gorge is within the southwestern part of the Wangapeka Ecological District in the North West Nelson Ecological

Please do everything in your power to protect the Mokihinui River catchment. Public lands of high biodiversity values must be protected from developers. A dam in this geologically unstable area would be very foolish, putting at risk those who live below it (as well as ruining the biodiversity values).

Our family often enjoys botanical outings, day walks and multi day tramps and we would like the Mokihinui River and the existing historical pack track preserved (not flooded).

We understand that local Tramping Clubs (including Buller Tramping Club) also oppose this proposal and rightly so.

Every time I walk the track I hear the miners and their beasts of burden along the pack track - it makes my spine tingle every time. The way the stones were built up to support the track over the creeks; the way the track comes to a sudden halt where the track was taken right out by the '29 quake, and the spot where the suicide took its place; you can just hear those miners still; and the 2 crosses at the beginning - it is all a very important part of NZ's history.

We have in the past descended from the Matiri Plateau via Larrikin Creek and then on down the Mokihinui River (a multi day trip). This classic route would now be compromised. The old historical pack track on the Mokihinui river is irreplaceable. We want our children and grandchildren to be able to use this historical track.


We ask that council decline this application for various resource consents related to the dam proposal. There are many other rivers with less important biodiversity, scenic and recreational values that could be used for hydro power schemes if necessary. Also, our family and many others have made a commitment to reducing our power usage.

Meridian says that the proposed Mokihinui dam will generate renewable energy, but are our wild ecologically-precious rivers renewable? Is causing the further decline of a species like the long-finned eel renewable?

New Zealanders accept the need for energy generation from renewable sources, but will not trade off our most valued natural biodiversity and landscapes for it.

We wish to be heard. We support the more substantive submission made by Wellington head office Forest & Bird and also the submission by Federated Mountain Clubs.

Sincerely

  
Zelka Grammer & family  
Tim Vallings  
Maungakaramea  
Whangarei  
Northland