

SUBMISSION ON RESOURCE CONSENT APPLICATIONS

Section 96 Of The Resource Management Act 1991



TO: THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

**PO BOX 66
GREYMOUTH**

Copy to:
Meridian Energy Limited
PO Box 2454,
Christchurch.

THE WEST COAST
REGIONAL COUNCIL
PH: 0508 8000 118
Fax: (03) 768 7133

Applicant: Meridian Energy Ltd

Application Numbers: tick boxes overleaf

Closing Date for Submissions on the Mokihinui Hydro Proposal: (Wednesday 23 April 2008)

(Please print clearly) Title: Mr Mrs Miss Ms (Please circle the appropriate title(s) or write below)

My/Our Full Name(s): Leonard George Fargan

Postal address: 291 Riccarton road
Riccarton
Christchurch

Wk Ph: _____ Hm Ph: _____ Cell: 0272269144

Wk Fax: _____ Hm Fax: _____ Email: lgf16@student.canterbury.ac.nz

I/we support the application numbers ticked on the back of this form (tick one)

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

The reasons for my/our submission are as follows (*further information attached (tick for yes)*)
[State in summary the nature of your submission, giving reasons]
See attached sheet

I/we wish the consent authority to make the following decision [Give details, including the nature of any conditions]
I wish the consent authority to deny any consent to meridian or any other company to dam the Mokihinui river.

Use the tick boxes below to indicate the resource consent applications your submission concerns.

I/we make my/our submission concerning **all** the resource consent applications below (tick)
My/our submission **only** concerns the resource applications ticked below (tick)

I/we **wish to be heard** in support of my/our submission (tick one)

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

Signature(s): 

Date: 7/4/08

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 Limited as per Section 96(4) of the RMA (tick)

Consent List

Mokihinui River
consents RC07150/1 – RC07150/6

Earthworks and Vegetation
consents RC07150/14 – RC07150/19

Inundation Area
consents RC07150/7 – RC07150/8

General Construction
consents RC07150/20 – RC07150/23

Staging Area
consents RC07150/9 – RC07150/10

Access Roads, Walking Tracks and Recreational
Activities
consents RC07150/24 – RC07150/26

Substation and Transmission
consents RC07150/11 – RC07150/13

RE: Proposed Mokihinui hydro-electric scheme

The damming of the Mokihinui River is completely preposterous. By damming the river, several endangered species and many range restricted and vulnerable species will be significantly threatened and/or impacted. Blue duck, kiwi, kaka, snails, bats, eels, galaxids and aquatic invertebrates just to name a few will could become extinct from the Mokihinui river region or be deleteriously affected by this project. The blue duck, for example, is specifically adapted to living in rivers of high flow, its range is restricted and is listed as nationally critical by DOC. By damming the river, fast flows will be eliminated from this extremely long section of river, thus removing important habitat for these birds. Given that these birds are so range restricted, any activity of this kind in such a critical environment is unacceptable. Meridian energy's Mokihinui "factsheet" it is claimed by them that "No threatened species of plants were found in the Mokihinui Gorge area and the area is not considered to be primary habitat of any threatened species of bird". This is a blatant lie, and whoever carried out their "study" clearly did not report the correct information. This "study" clearly does not have any scientific merit and should be completely disregarded, as there is significant evidence that this statement is false. For example, in the same paragraph of Meridian energy's Mokihinui "factsheet" it states that "seven whoio (blue duck) were sighted during the studies and are believed to live in the area". As mentioned, the blue duck is listed as nationally critical. Clearly this "study" has no merit if a major finding is so blatantly erroneous. Significant effort has been directed by DOC and other conservation organisations to strengthen the existing blue duck populations on the West Coast and to introduce captivity raised individuals. Meridian plans to undo all this hard work, with a poorly thought out and researched proposal.

Furthermore, the building of an impenetrable barrier on the river will eliminate all populations of anadromous galaxids (many species) and eels (2 species) and salmonids (salmon and trout) upstream of the dam. This is also unacceptable for the ecological health of the river and those seeking to recreate by whitebaiting or fishing the river for salmon, trout or eels. The ridiculous idea that Meridian employees will physically transport these animals upstream of the dam is laughable and completely unachievable in any meaningful ecological sense.

Many animals will be impacted by this project if it is allowed to continue. This is also true of the flora of the region. The Mokihinui river region represents a significant portion of lowland forest, which has been severely diminished by human activity over the last 200 or so years. By damming the region, as outlined in the proposal, hundreds of hectares of forest and the animals which live within the area affected will be completely destroyed; drowned or forced to move into inhospitable environs. Furthermore, given that so many species are not yet described in rainforests, such as the one that will be flooded under the scheme, it is entirely possible that undiscovered species could go extinct and/or genetically distinct local populations of more widespread species could be eliminated. Again, this is completely unacceptable and in direct opposition to the New Zealand biodiversity strategy. It is unbelievable that a state owned enterprise would threaten the biodiversity of New Zealand for profit.

I quote directly from the New Zealand biodiversity website regarding "land and freshwater ecosystems" to put this proposal in context: "Many native plants, animals and their habitats in New Zealand's land and freshwater ecosystems are under threat from human activities and encroachment, and unwanted introduced organisms". This statement is referring directly to such projects as that proposed by Meridian

energy in its planned destruction of the Mokihinui river valley. Under the New Zealand biodiversity strategy all New Zealanders and companies operating in New Zealand are obliged to “halt the decline of indigenous biodiversity and protect valuable introduced biodiversity on land and freshwater”. The government and regional authorities (i.e. the West Coast Regional Council) are obliged to fulfil its international obligations and halt this proposed activity before any harm to our native species is effected. The Mokihinui hydro-electric dam is not acceptable and must not be allowed to continue.

Leonard Forgan
PhD Candidate
University of Canterbury
New Zealand