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THE WEST COAST
REGIONAL COUNCIL

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.

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): Peter Russell

Postal address: 5 Nikau Street Newtown
Wellington

Wk Ph: _____ Hm Ph: 04 389 5484 Cell: 021 207 6211

Wk Fax: _____ Hm Fax: _____ Email: russellpk@gmail.com

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]
The ecological impacts are too great, especially
those on threatened species, freshwater systems
and old-growth, lowland forest.

I/we wish the consent authority to make the following decision [Give details, including the nature of any conditions]
all
Decline the resource consent applications.


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: 21/4/08

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

Inundation Area
consents RC07150/7 – RC07150/8

Staging Area
consents RC07150/9 – RC07150/10

Substation and Transmission
consents RC07150/11 – RC07150/13

Earthworks and Vegetation
consents RC07150/14 – RC07150/19

General Construction
consents RC07150/20 – RC07150/23

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

Attachment to submission on resource consent applications by Meridian Energy Ltd for the Mokihinui Hydro Proposal

To West Coast Regional Council

By Peter K Russell
21 April 2008

I am an ecologist and have worked with several threatened species including kiwi, weka and matata (fernbirds). I am an ecological restoration consultant and I specialise in weed management. I have enjoyed walking through the lower Mokihinui Gorge.

The proposal is ecologically unsustainable and is based on fundamentally unsustainable assumptions.

New Zealand does not need more electricity generation. It is widely recognised that energy conservation measures are more than enough to satisfy current demand for electricity. Constant economic growth (which requires more and more energy production) is neither necessary nor sustainable.

The proposal does not seriously discuss the possibility that New Zealanders could change their lifestyle to require less electricity and less (or no) economic growth. Instead Meridian accepts the outdated idea that New Zealanders' "standard of living" (i.e. income) is of prime importance when it is widely recognised that it is our "quality of life" that matters more. Our quality of life includes experiencing wilderness, natural New Zealand and its unique biological diversity and simply knowing that places like the Mokihinui Gorge (with all its ecological values) exist.

Even if it was necessary to generate more electricity, the environmental impacts of the proposed dam and transmission line would far outweigh the economic benefits, especially those on threatened species, freshwater systems and old-growth, lowland forest. Contrary to the Terrestrial Ecology Assessment the areas that would be affected by the proposal contain significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna. Further, many of the ecological effects regarded as "minor" are actually major. The (flawed) findings and recommendations of the Terrestrial Ecology Assessment prepared for Meridian appear to have been predetermined in order to support its proposal.

The proposal would have unacceptable environmental impacts on increasingly rare, relatively intact areas. These impacts could not be remedied or mitigated, including habitat destruction, fragmentation of populations of threatened species and weed invasion. They can only be avoided by declining all the resource consent applications. The proposed attempts to avoid, remedy or mitigate environmental impacts are flawed and inadequate. For example, the flooding of terrestrial habitat in one location cannot be mitigated by conducting predator control in another location.

If the consent applications are granted and the proposed developments are not prevented by other means, Meridian and the West Coast will need to spend a great deal more on public relations to maintain their "clean green" image.

I expect this and all other short submissions against the proposal to be taken seriously despite their brevity and lack of detail. Unlike Meridian and many of its supporters who stand to gain financially from the proposal, many people opposed to such environmental destruction do not have the resources (especially time) to thoroughly research and prepare detailed submissions on such proposals. Their submissions must not be cast aside and considered almost meaningless, as was the case with "unsubstantive" submissions against Timberlands West Coast Ltd's "Beech Scheme" in 1998. Instead they should be considered to add weight to similar contents of more lengthy and detailed submissions, such as that made by the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society.

End.