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WEST COAST
REGIONAL COUNCIL

SUBMISSION ON RESOURCE CONSENT APPLICATIONS

Section 96 Of The Resource Management Act 1991



THE WEST COAST
REGIONAL COUNCIL

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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): Steve Chapman

Postal address: 25 Walkers Rd
Lyttelton 8082

Wk Ph: _____ Hm Ph: _____ Cell: 027 2800 956

Wk Fax: _____ Hm Fax: _____ Email: _____

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]

I/we wish the consent authority to make the following decision [Give details, including the nature of any conditions]
See submission.

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

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

**SUBMISSION ON AN APPLICATION FOR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSENT UNDER SECTION 96 OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991**

To: West Coast Regional Council

Cc: Meridian Energy Limited

From: Steve Chapman

Date: 20 April 2008

Re: RC07150, Mokihinui Hydro Power Scheme

Submitter Contact Details

Name of Party: Steve Chapman

Contact Phone: 027-2800956

Email Address: schapman@slingshot.co.nz

Postal Address: 25 Walkers Rd, LYTTELTON 8082

- 1. I oppose the application by Meridian Energy Limited** for the construction of the Mokihinui Hydro Power Scheme as detailed in the resource consent applications numbered RC07150/1 – RC07150/26
- 2. The particular aspect of the application I oppose is:**
The construction of the dam and consequent inundation of the Mokihinui River between Mokihinui Forks and the Welcome Creek road end.
- 3. I make the following submission in opposition to the application:**

a) *Details of Submitter*

I have been a kayaker since 1973. I have competed, instructed and paddled recreationally during my thirty years of involvement. I am employed by Christchurch Polytechnic and lecturer on Outdoor Education and Adventure Recreation; the Mokihinui therefore is of interest to both my recreation and professional life. I have kayaked the Mokihinui River on several occasions (at least 3 times and possibly 5). All trips encompass the entire section affected by this proposal.

b) *Reasons for making submission*

My primary reasons for opposing the proposed hydroelectric scheme are:

- As a kayaker the Mokihinui River has high significance for me, it provides opportunity for unique whitewater to the West Coast – (this is due to its relative low level of difficulty compared to other West Coast river systems), its scenic values and the educational opportunities which it could and has been used for.
- As noted in the Assessment of Environmental Impact document “*Whitewater kayaking and rafting are the most important activities in the gorge*” and “*The most significant*

effects of the proposal are the change to the rafting and white water opportunities in the catchment”

- The proposed scheme will result in the loss of a section of river which is navigable by the majority of kayakers and canoeists the type of which is not available elsewhere on the West Coast (i.e. there are no other rivers with a section of this grade, length, or beauty)
- The applicant does not propose suitable mitigation for the removal of the white water.
- The applicant is incorrect in its assertion that *“The Mokihinui River ...is of no more than regional significance for recreation.”*
- It is incorrect to call dams and the electricity generated by hydro electricity sustainable; dams have a very short and limited life, you only have to look at the Waihopi river dam (Blenheim) to see that it has become so full of sediment and rocks that it cannot store water and is therefore useless and should be removed.
- The life span of many dams in America are now over and their removal is now becoming common place, damming NZ’s rivers is a limited response to a complex problem, this is not the answer, we are giving up too much resource for a short and limited benefit. The benefits do not outweigh the loss.

Further details are given below:

Importance of the Mokihinui River:

- Personally I think the section of the Mokihinui affected by this proposal provides the best class 3 to 4 whitewater wilderness trip in New Zealand, it is ideal for low end intermediates kayaker, such as my students at Christchurch Polytechnic.
- River environments that are as beautiful as the Mokihinui which are not extreme are an important step for kayakers accessing the West Coast rivers.
- The ability to portage the rapids (even at higher flows) means that the river provides a significant developmental opportunity for kayakers and canoeists. Many other class 3/4 rivers do not offer the opportunity to inspect or easily portage the major rapids.
- The Mokihinui main stem gorge is therefore one of the few wilderness river trips within the scope of the vast majority of kayakers and canoeists who would be insufficiently skilled to paddle the more abundant Grade 4/5 high gradient wilderness rivers elsewhere in the South Island.

Loss of whitewater amenity on entire River:

- The lower Mokihinui River will be lost and the proposal will result in less usage of the upper Mokihinui River.
- Under the proposal, the dam on the Mokihinui would flood the beautiful granite gorge and valley most of the way back to Lake Perrine. The grade 3 whitewater would be lost and significant recreational opportunities would go with it.

- Kayaking and canoeing on the class 4 upper Mokihinui River would also be affected due to access difficulties. There is no mitigation proposed for this.

Lack of suitable mitigation:

- The proposed mountain biking track and enhanced walking tracks are not mitigation for the loss of whitewater on the lower river nor do they compensate for the more difficult access to the upper river.
- Meridian Energy Limited suggests the proposed lake will result in alternative opportunities for kayakers. It will not result in an alternative comparable to the lost whitewater and therefore it is not compensatory. It is like offering a flat pavement footpath in place of a mountain track and they saying “it just the same – it’s for walking on. Why don’t you like it?”

Incorrect assessment of significance of the Mokihinui River for recreation:

- Consultation by the applicant was not sufficiently wide, with only 2 kayakers consulted regarding the whitewater amenity.
- The river is navigated predominantly by kayakers and canoeists from outside of the region. I have navigated it with at least 10 different people, none of whom live on the West Coast.
- The Mokihinui is a very important part of the spectrum of West Coast rivers. The West Coast is renowned internationally for its whitewater rivers and many domestic and international tourists come to the West Coast because of this.

3 I seek that the application be declined in its entirety.

4 I do not wish to be heard in support of this submission.



Steve Chapman
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LYTTELTON 8082
schapman@slingshot.co.nz
Ph 027 2800956

Date 21-4-08