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18 APR 2008  
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.

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): ZELKA GRAMMER + FAMILY  
TIM VALLINGS

Postal address: BINT ROAD RD 8 MAUNGAKARAMEA

WHANGAREI  
NORTHLAND

Wk Ph: (SAME) Hm Ph: 09 4322155 Cell: —

Wk Fax: — Hm Fax: — Email: zlg@xnet.co.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] ADVERSE  
SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT MANY ASPECTS OF THE  
PROPOSAL

I/we wish the consent authority to make the following decision [Give details, including the nature of any conditions]  
DECLINE THE APPLICATION IN ITS ENTIRETY  
PROTECT THE UNIQUE, WILD + SCENIC  
MOKIHINUI RIVER.  
WE SEEK THE LOCAL AUTHORITY TO DECLINE  
ALL 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): Zelka Grammer ZELKA GRAMMER

TIM VALLINGS

Date: 15 April 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

17 April 2008

Submission to:

Att: Karen Glover, Consents Administration Officer  
West coast Regional Council  
PO Box 66  
Greymouth  
South Island

Submission by: Mrs. Z Grammer and family

Contact details:

Z Grammer & Tim Vallings  
Bint Road RD 8 Maungakaramea Whangarei  
Tel 09 4322155  
Email: zlg@xnet.co.nz

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission so that together we may achieve sound environmental and recreational outcomes.

Our farming family opposes the application by Meridian Energy to dam the wild and scenic Mokihinui River, which would flood 330 hectares of the 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 values. The river is also located in a geologically unstable area.

We understand that the dam will be 85 metres high and 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, 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 West Coast Regional Council and Buller District Council have both asked Environment Minister Trevor Mallard to use his power to "call in" the application – a request supported by Forest & Bird.

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.

If the application is not called in, an initial hearing would be heard by the local councils, and their decision would almost certainly be appealed to the Environment Court (either by Meridian or opponents of the application).

If the application is called in, the minister would probably appoint a board of inquiry to hear submissions and make a final decision, or could direct the matter straight to the Environment Court.

Calling in the application and having it heard by a board of inquiry is likely to reduce the cost to the community, the councils and the wider public

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 in Northland. However, as we greatly value this river 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 blue duck (whio) is especially precious to us and the loss its habitat in the Mokihinui is unacceptable.

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

- adverse recreational effects (loss of historic tramping "pack track" 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 (historical tramping "pack track")

-effects on the purity/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 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 are opposing 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 **Regional Policy Statement (RPS)** emphasizes the need to avoid, remedy or mitigate the degradation of water resources and aquatic ecosystems (7.2), and also the sustainable management of soils (7.1). Meridian says that the effects of sedimentation and erosion will be negligible over the whole catchment. However the gorge is an intrinsic and important passageway for the whole catchment (as well as downstream of the gorge), and it is these areas that are being impacted on, and the effects here are major. The project will accelerate slope erosion due to saturation of the slope banks.

Contrary to what Meridian says, there will be significant degradation of water quality downstream due to tree-felling. Few safeguards, such as forestry companies put in place, would be possible to be implemented here due to the steep nature of the terrain, with the consequence being a high degree of sedimentation accompanying the tree-felling, and consequent soil slippage from saturation and disturbance.

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 ecosystems 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.

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 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. 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.

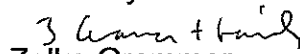
Meridian says that the proposed Mokihinui dam will generate renewable energy, but are our wild ecologically-precious rivers renewable? Is causing the further decline of a species like the long-finned eel renewable?

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 head office Forest & Bird and Federated Mountain Clubs.

Please keep us informed.

Sincerely

  
Zelka Grammer  
Tim Vallings & family  
Bint Road  
RD 8 Maungakaramea  
Whangarei  
Northland