



THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

21 November 2017

Decision on Te Kuha Mining Project released

Consent has been granted, subject to conditions, for the Te Kuha Mining Project on the West Coast.

The Te Kuha Mining Project is a 'greenfields' open cast coal mine located approximately 12km southwest of Westport. It is situated in the West Coast coal fields, which are New Zealand's only known source of bituminous (coking) coal, valued internationally for its low ash and sulphur content.

Run as a joint application between the West Coast Regional Council and the Buller District Council, it was publicly notified in April 2017 with 744 submissions received. A hearing was held over 9 days by a three person panel consisting of Regional Councillor Terry Archer, a landscape architect, John Hudson, and chaired by a retired Environment Court Judge, Gordon Whiting.

Mike Meehan, Chief Executive of the West Coast Regional Council, said that the Council had undertaken an extremely robust process involving various experts which assisted with the Commissioners final decision.

"The ability for the hearing process to facilitate the various parties to develop consent conditions together is significant in ensuring that the very best outcomes for the community, the environment and business are achieved."

The decision focused on the effects relating to groundwater and hydrology, water quality, aquatic ecology, geotechnical issues, dust and impact on the Westport water supply and climate change. It also considered the positive effects of the proposal. The Commissioners determined that the potential negative effects were not contrary to the relevant objectives and policies of the Regional Plans if the consent conditions were adhered to.

"The imposed conditions are robust and thorough and subject to input from all parties," said Mr Meehan. "They allow for adaptive management techniques to be undertaken in order to address any potential impacts that may arise."

The open cast coal mine will cover 144ha with 12ha on Conservation Estate and 100ha on Westport Water Conservation Reserve. The remainder is on private land. Neither the access arrangement with the Department of Conservation, or the decision on use of the Water Reserve, have been made or released yet.

The decision is now subject to a 15 working day appeal period. To appeal the decision an appeal must be lodged with the Environment Court then served on the applicant and each party that made a valid submission on the application. More information can be found on the West Coast Regional Council website www.wcrc.govt.nz/tekuha-mine

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