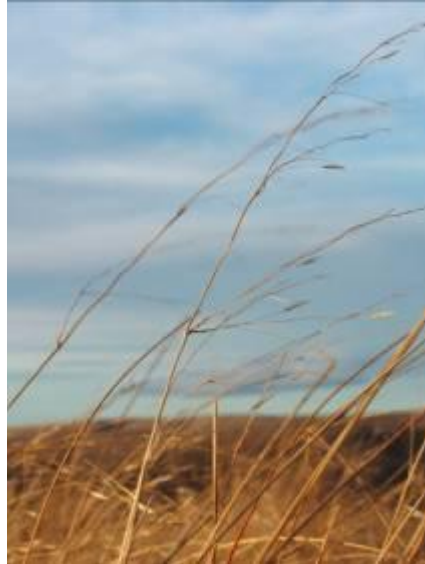


SAVE CENTRAL



GOVERNMENT SHOWING NO LEADERSHIP OVER WIND FARMS

**Attention: News Editor
13 June 2008**

The Government, moving at snail's pace to develop a national wind strategy based on solid research, is exposing New Zealand to power shortages and price hikes.

Transpower system operations manager Kieran Devine has revealed that three major farms, located around the Manawatu Gorge, supplied less than 1% of their capacity during peak load periods during each of the past three winters.

The three farms generating from wind around the Manawatu Gorge are: Trustpower's Tararua (134 turbines), NZ Wind Farms' Te Rere Hau (104), Meridian Energy's Te Apiti (55).

"Either there was insufficient wind at that time, or the current farms are all in the wrong locations and there's not enough wind system diversity," Mr Devine said in an interview with the Taranaki News.

"We have real concerns about the large amount of wind generation planned in the lower North Island, because the preliminary information is that they will all have very similar characteristics to the Manawatu farms and that won't help with winter peaks. We'd prefer they were spread around so that when one's up others will be down and it would balance itself out."

"Fortunately, the wind characteristics at the new White Hill farm [29 turbines, near Mossburn, Southland] appear to be different to Manawatu."

Yet engineer and independent energy consultant Bryan Leyland, commenting on the recent consent of nearby Kaiwera Downs wind farm (240 MW) in the Otago Daily Times, said records over the past six years showed the wind did not blow reliably during late summer, autumn, and winter in Southland.

Commented Save Central Spokesman Grahame Sydney on the Transpower admission, "New Zealanders are being herded into thinking that we must jump on the wind farm bandwagon and that, hey presto, we will get at least 15 per cent of our energy needs from this renewable resource and all our problems will be solved."

"The fact is the Government, in its race to reorganise its mismanaged Kyoto Protocol obligations, has shown a lack of leadership, planning and sheer common sense in allowing huge investment in wind farms, at a sometimes devastating environmental cost, in areas that aren't delivering on the promises."

Sydney, a longtime Central Otago resident, said there was no evidence state-owned Meridian Energy's Project Hayes, proposed for Central Otago, would behave any differently to the wind farms of the Manawatu Gorge.

"Central Otago's winters are celebrated for their crystalline frosty mornings and subsequent breathless days. Hoar frosts, frozen ponds and lakes, ice-skating and curling are the products of serene, windless conditions. In midwinter, no matter how gigantic the wind estate nor how much money has been spent, the Central Otago wind proposals will often produce very little energy.

"NIWA reports that Alexandra, not far from the proposed Lammermoors site, averages 148 ground frost days per year. In a similar vein, residents living near the Project Hayes have observed that frost may lie on the ground in winter for four weeks at a time. It's apparent

that on such frigid days and nights – which result in peak energy demand – the wind turbines will be motionless, right when they’re most needed.”

Sydney added, “We cannot control Mother Nature. We’ve already discovered this with hydro – the reason for the nation’s current predicament. To suggest that something as inherently fickle, intermittent and uncontrollable as wind is the major way forward for the country’s backstop energy demands and growth is patently flawed. There are more reliable alternatives – like our immense geothermal resource.”

“One would at least expect a responsible government to guide such a process with a national framework – backed by solid research, science and sense – rather than leaving it to local councils whose lack of specific wind farm knowledge leaves them dangerously out of their depth and, too often, mesmerised by corporate spin and pay-offs as generators race to push these carbon credit schemes through the Resource Management process. The energy consumer – the New Zealand public - is quite clearly the loser.”

Transpower’s Kieran Devine noted with concern that power planners are just beginning to discover what wind is all about because the detail needed for wind farm management has never been required in the past.

KEY FACTS

- If it proceeds, Project Hayes will be one of the world’s largest wind farms.
- It will physically occupy 92 square kilometres of the Central Otago landscape with 176 turbines and 150 kilometres of oversize roading.
- Each turbine will be as high as the observation deck of Auckland’s Sky Tower.
- Construction alone, excluding transmission upgrades, will cost \$2 billion of taxpayers’ money.

Grahame Sydney
Spokesperson, Save Central
gsyds@es.co.nz
03 447 3029
027 222 1423
027 44 22 714

Richard Reeve
Media Liaison, Save Central
richard.reeve@xtra.co.nz
03 482 2215
027 716 4038