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RE: Te Uku Wind Farm Electricity Transmission Route Finalised

On 15 October, Meridian Energy and WEL Networks announced that the Te Uku Wind Farm project is moving ahead.

WEL Networks, as your local electricity distribution company, is responsible for constructing the electricity transmission route that will run from the wind farm site to WEL's substations at Te Uku and Te Kowhai.

We are writing to inform you of several changes we have made to the originally proposed transmission route plan. Primarily, the main change is that we have reduced the operating voltage of the new lines required from 110kV to 33kV, meaning new poles will only be 15 metres high on average, rather than 17 metres. We have made this change because the project will now have a capacity of 64MW, which is 20MW less than originally consented.

Additionally, we will now be undergrounding one-third of the lines along the 25 kilometre route. We've listened to the concerns of landowners who have asked for undergrounding and have been able to put together a slightly different route that allows us to underground eight kilometres of lines. This means it is most likely we will no longer remove trees and vegetation along the new undergrounded sections.

Another major change is that a substation is no longer required at the wind farm site. Instead, a small, fully-enclosed switching station will be constructed.

We have submitted our altered transmission route plans to Waikato District Council for approval. We expect to begin removing vegetation along the transmission route sometime before Christmas. New power poles will be erected commencing around February and the entire transmission route will be built and commissioned by October 2010.

In addition to building the new transmission route, WEL Networks will perform maintenance and upgrading work along 10 kilometres of existing lines from Cogswell Road to Whatawhata. This work involves replacing old wires on the existing line with new wires and will be performed after the new transmission route is completed. This upgrading and maintenance work will bring the line up to WEL's standards and will improve security of supply in the local area.

All landowners along the transmission route have been posted this information. We have also met face-to-face with those landowners most affected by these changes.

Please phone our project team on 0800 Te Uku Wind (0800 838 589) if you have any questions about the information contained in this letter. We also encourage you to review the enclosed map and Question and Answer Fact Sheet.

Sincerely,
Dr Julian Elder