# **CHAPTER 6**

**Stakeholder Consultation** 

# 6. Stakeholder Consultation

# 6.1 Preliminary Consultation

The Proponent submitted a draft Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the proposed Boco Rock Wind Farm to the New South Wales (NSW) Department of Planning (DoP) on the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2008. The draft PEA allowed the DoP to identify key government and agency stakeholders who would provide input into the Director-General's Requirements (DGR's), and request that they attend a Planning Focus Meeting (PFM). Following the PFM a final PEA was submitted on the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008 and DGR's were issued.

A subsequent material change to the Project required the submission of a revised PEA to the DoP on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009. A second PFM was not considered necessary because of the advanced stage of the Project, however revised DGR's were issued and it is these that form the basis of this Environmental Assessment (EA).

# 6.1.1 Planning Focus Meeting

A PFM for the Project was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2008 at the Nimmitabel Country Club, Nimmitabel. Staff from Wind Prospect CWP were on-hand to introduce the Project, provide input to the meeting and answer any questions. Agency participants included:

- Dinuka McKenzie and Nathan Foster (NSW DoP);
- Grantley Ingram (Bombala Council);
- Ron Dakin (Cooma-Monaro Shire Council); and
- Sandie Jones and Alison Treweek (Department of Environment and Climate Change(DECC)).

Additionally, agencies invited but unable to attend the PFM included:

- Department of Water and Energy (DWE);
- Department of Primary Industries (DPI);
- Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA);
- Airservices Australia (AA); and
- Commonwealth Department of Defence (DoD).

Participants met in Nimmitabel for the PFM and then travelled to the site of the installed wind monitoring mast located within the northern section of the Springfield Cluster, via Springfield and Avon Lake Road. From this location the participants were able to view the entire site comprising the Sherwins Cluster to the south, the Boco Cluster to the east and, although not proposed at the time of the PFM, the Springfield and Yandra Clusters could also be viewed north and east respectively.

# 6.1.2 Director-General's Requirements

Following the submission of the final PEA, the DoP prepared revised DGR's based on advice and input received from the list of government and agency stakeholders listed above. The DGR's are summarised in **Table 5.2** in **Chapter 5** Planning Context indicating where each item is addressed in the EA.

In addition to the prescribed DGR's the DoP identified a range of other parties with whom consultation would be required. These are outlined in **Section 6.3** below, together with a much broader range of individual and group stakeholders identified by the Proponent.

# **6.2** Approach to Consultations

Public consultation for the Project commenced in September 2008 during the early stages of Project planning and feasibility assessment. Consultations at this time aimed to inform the general public, neighbouring residents, statutory regulators and other stakeholders of the Project in order to identify issues that required addressing during Project planning and design. Extensive public consultation has taken place since the early stages of the Project and has targeted all interested and potentially affected parties. Consultation took the form of:

- Letters of notification to various stakeholders, including local, state and national groups and agencies;
- Face-to-face notification (or letter drop in cases of absentees) of neighbouring residents within a 5 km radius of the Project;
- Newsletter (x2), Public Opinion Survey (x2), Project website, media release and radio interviews;
- A Public Exhibition Open Day held in the Nimmitabel Country Club; and
- Ongoing consultation meetings with various stakeholders throughout the Project planning and design stages.

#### 6.3 Stakeholder Identification and Consultation

The stakeholders listed below in **Tables 6.1**, **6.2** and **6.3** were provided with information regarding the proposed development and were invited to provide any comment, information or guidance in the course of the Project development and in the preparation of this EA. Copies of the responses (where given in writing) are included in **Appendix 4** and summarised in **Section 6.4**.

# 6.3.1 Key Interest Groups

Table 6.1 List of all individual and group stakeholders directly consulted

Group	Stakeholder		
Key Interest Groups			
Immediate	Participating Landowners		
Community	Neighbouring Residents		
	Bega Local Aboriginal Land Council		
	Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council		
	Ngunnawal Local Aboriginal Land Council		
Local Aboriginal	Konanggo Consultancy		
Groups	Ngunnawal Heritage Aboriginal Corporation		
	Queanbeyan Ngunnawal Organisation		
Yurwang Gundana Consultancy Cultural Heritage Serv			
	Ngunnawal Elders Corporation		
	Locally elected members		
Local	Snowy River Interstate Landcare Committee		
Community and	Berridale Chamber of Commerce		
Businesses	Cooma Chamber of Commerce		
	Dalgety Chamber of Commerce		

Group	Stakeholder
	Nimmitabel Chamber of Commerce
	Cooma Country Women's Association
	Nimmitabel Country Women's Association
	Nimmitabel Advancement Group
	Nimmitabel Landcare
	Rotary Club of Cooma
	Bombala and District Development Association
	Cooma-Monaro Historical Society Inc
	Cooma Pastoral and Agricultural Association
	Cooma Ladies' Probus Club
	Cooma Men's Probus Club
	Bombala Rural Lands Protection Board
	Cooma Rural Lands Protection Board
	Title holders of mineral exploration leases and mining licences
	within the study area <sup>#</sup>
	Interested people in the broader community
	Local Businesses

<sup>#</sup> Indicates those stakeholder groups that were identified by the DoP as key consultees and provided input into the DGR's.

**Initial Consultations**: Face-to-face contact was made with many neighbouring property owners during the week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2008, within approximately 5 km of the wind farm site. A total of approximately 50 neighbouring residences were visited. These residents were provided with information on key points of the Project proposal, Issue 1 of the Boco Rock Wind Farm Newsletter (see **Appendix 5**), office contact details, a Public Opinion Survey form and a Frequently Asked Questions brochure on generic wind farm facts. In the event of the resident being absent, a package containing the aforementioned information was left at the main door/letterbox.

In addition to this targeted consultation, Issue 1 of the Boco Rock Wind Farm Newsletter was mailed-out to 855 Private and Business Roadside addresses in the Cooma, Nimmitabel, Bombala and Cathcart post code regions with a request to return the Public Opinion Survey. Given the high density of street addresses in the area, a media release was issued to the local newspapers, providing summary information on the proposed Project and again encouraging interested stakeholders to provide comment on the Project.

**Website Launch**: In November 2008 the Project website was launched (<a href="www.bocorockwindfarm.com.au">www.bocorockwindfarm.com.au</a>) as a means of providing ongoing, up-to-date information to interested stakeholders. The website provides a mechanism for people to provide feedback via an online Public Opinion Survey, as well as contact details for the Proponent.

Change in Scope and Scale: In response to the comments received from the stakeholder groups listed (see Section 6.4) the Project changed in both geographic scope and scale, increasing from 73 to 127 wind turbines and from 9 to 17 participating landowners. The magnitude of this change was relayed to stakeholders in February 2009 via Issue 2 of the Boco Rock Wind Farm Newsletter (see Appendix 5) in addition to a second Public Opinion Survey specifically focused on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Again this comprised a coordinated mail-out to 855 Private and Business Roadside addresses in the Cooma, Nimmitabel, Bombala and Cathcart post code regions and was supported by a media release advising of the proposed changes and the Public Exhibition Open Day,

held on the 26<sup>th</sup> March. On this occasion hard copies of the second Newsletter were also deposited at the Nimmitabel general store.

**Public Exhibition**: A public exhibition was held for the proposed Boco Rock Wind Farm at the Nimmitabel Country Club in Nimmitabel on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009. Residents of the Cooma and Bombala districts were advised of the exhibition by way of advertisements in local and regional newspapers (Cooma-Monaro Express, Monaro Post and the Bombala Times) for the two weeks leading up to the exhibition. A radio interview on ABC South-East (NSW) was conducted the day before which was later uploaded to the ABC Regional News website.

Over 100 people attended the public exhibition which presented provisional details of the proposed Boco Rock Wind Farm and interconnection options, including its likely appearance illustrated by means of plans and photomontages. A number of panels were displayed, containing information about the Project and wind energy in general. A video presentation from the British Wind Energy Association (BWEA) was also shown, demonstrating the key features of wind farms during planning, construction and operation. Copies of the second issue of the Boco Rock Wind Farm newsletter, Frequently Asked Questions brochure and company information relating to Wind Prospect CWP were also made available. Eight members of the Wind Prospect CWP team were on-hand to answer questions and explain the details of the proposed development.

**Project Refinement**: In July 2009 further modifications were announced via means of a media release through the local news and radio media and an update to the Project website. These modifications incorporated findings from a range of key assessments and following ongoing public consultation. In particular the Proponent detailed a reduction in the number of turbines to 125 with respect to minimising ecological impacts and the rearrangement of several turbines within the Boco Cluster to address neighbouring landowner concerns. It was also clarified that the proposed wind turbine tower heights would be 100 m (and therefore a maximum blade of 152m) to maximise the full potential of the local wind resource and cater for new turbine models entering the market.

In addition to these direct modifications to the physical nature of the wind farm, it was also announced that discussions had commenced with Cooma-Monaro Shire and Bombala Councils regarding the creation of a Community Fund for the area and that surveys on the power line to connect the wind farm to the local grid were underway.

# 6.3.2 Key Government Consultees

**Table 6.2 List of all Key Government Consultees** 

Group	Stakeholder	
<b>Key Government</b>	Consultees	
Local Councils	Cooma-Monaro Shire Council #	
Local Councils	Bombala Council #	
	NSW DECC#	
	NSW DPI <sup>#</sup>	
NSW	NSW DWE <sup>#</sup>	
Government	NSW Office of Water (NOW)	
Departments	NSW Department of Lands (DoL) - Crown Lands / Native Title	
	NSW DoL - Surveyor General	
	NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA)#	

Group	Stakeholder	
	NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) #	
	Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (CMA) #	
	Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts	
Federal	(DEWHA)	
Government	DoD <sup>#</sup>	
Agencies	CASA <sup>#</sup>	
	AA <sup>#</sup>	
Service	Transgrid	
Providers	Country Energy #	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>#</sup> Indicates those stakeholder groups that were identified by the DoP as key consultees and provided input into the DGR's.

#### 6.3.3 Other Government and Non-Government Consultees

Table 6.3 List of all Other Government and Non Government Organisation Consultees

Group	Stakeholder
Other Governmen	nt and Non Government Organisations
Other Government and Non Government Organisations	Australian Conservation Foundation World Wildlife Fund for Nature (Threatened Species Network) Greenpeace Planet Ark Nature Conservation Council NSW Office of the Renewable Energy Regulator Aerial Agricultural Association Australia * EMI Co's (inc. ACMA)

<sup>#</sup> Indicates those stakeholder groups that were identified by the DoP as key consultees and provided input into the DGR's.

A Stakeholder Consultation Plan created from the outset of the Project is summarised in **Table 6.4** below. The Plan detailed a timeline by which the dissemination of information and consultations occurred with all three stakeholder categories. Throughout this period, consultation continued with all stakeholders that expressed an ongoing interest in the Project.

Table 6.4 Key stages in the consultation process

Approx. Timing	Category / Group / Stakeholder	Nature of consultation
2007 angoing	Participating landowners	Initial approach, contract negotiation, ongoing development liaison
2007 - ongoing	Country Energy / Transgrid	Initial approach, connection application, ongoing grid connection studies
July 2008	DoP	Opinion sought and Project declared to be a Major Project under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment (EP&A) Act, 1979
September to October 2008	DoP DECC DWE NOW DPI Cooma-Monaro Shire Council Bombala Council DoD CASA AA	PFM, submission of the Project Application, PEA, receipt of initial DGR's
	Neighbouring Residents	Information disseminated via door-knocking and Newsletter #1 mail-out and feedback sought
September 2008 - ongoing	Local Aboriginal Groups	Information disseminated via phone call and/or letter/email accompanied by Newsletter #1 and feedback sought
	Local Community Groups	Information disseminated via letter/email, accompanied by Newsletter #1mail-out and feedback sought
	NSW Government Departments	Information disseminated via phone call and/or letter/email accompanied by Newsletter #1 and feedback sought
	Federal Government Departments	Information disseminated via phone call and/or letter/email and feedback sought
	Other Govt. And Non-Govt. Organisations	Information disseminated via letter/email and feedback sought
November 2008	All	Boco Rock Wind Farm website launch and accompanying media release
January 2009	Local Aboriginal Groups	Archaeological and cultural heritage survey participation
February 2009	Key Interest Groups and Local Councils	Information disseminated via letter/email accompanied by Newsletter #2 notifying of status of assessments and proposed modification to Project geographic scope and scale, including:  i, major modification to layout footprint to accommodate landowner concerns

Approx. Timing	Category / Group / Stakeholder	Nature of consultation	
		ii, increase in participating landowners to 17 following significant local support since Project announcement	
		iii, overall increase in max. number of turbines to 127 with respect to both land availability and grid capacity	
February to March 2009	Participating landowners and Neighbouring Residents	Targeted discussions with landowners within and east of the Project with regard to routing a power line to connect the wind farm to the grid	
March 2000	Key Interest Groups and Local	Public Exhibition Open Day held in Nimmitabel incorporating maps, facts and figures and finding from key assessments under taken to date.	
March 2009	Councils	Although to be assessed separately, information was presented with respect to a number of potential transmission line routes. (This is further detailed in <b>Section 6.6</b> below)	
May to June 2009	DoP	Resubmission of the Project Application, PEA incorporate Project changes, declaration that the Project is considered Critical Infrastructur and reissuing of DGR's	
May 2009	Participating landowners Cooma-Monaro Shire Council Bombala Council RTA DoL	Notification of all landowners, upon which the proposed development may occur or impact, of the Major Project Application in accordance with Clause 8F of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000	
May 2009 - ongoing	DEWHA	Referral of proposed action with respect to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act, 1999.	
		Information disseminated via targeted door- knocking, media release, and website update of further changes to Project geographic scope and scale, including:	
	All	i, reduction of max. number of turbines to 125 in response to ecology findings	
July 2009		ii, modification to the layout footprint to accommodate landowner concerns	
		iii, increase in the max. hub height to be assessed to maximise the full potential of the local wind resource	
	Participating landowners and Neighbouring Residents	Although to be assessed separately, field surveys along the preferred power line route commence. Information disseminated via targeted phone calls, letters and face to face meetings	

Approx. Timing	Category / Group / Stakeholder	Nature of consultation
	DECC	Biodiversity offset negotiations
August 2009	DEWHA	Determination of 'Controlled Action' status under the EPBC Act
September 2009	DEWHA	Receipt of supplementary assessment requirements provide by DEWHA
October 2009	DoP and Proponent	Submission of Draft EA to DoP for adequacy review
October/November 2009	DoP and Proponent	Submission of final EA to DoP for Public Exhibition
Future		
November 2009	All	Public Exhibition of the EA during which submissions can be made
December 2009	Proponent	Prepares Preferred Project Report /Submissions Report in response to submission
April/May 2010	DoP and DEWHA	Development Consent decision

# 6.4 Stakeholder Response

# 6.4.1 Key Interest Groups

A number of Key Interest Group stakeholders have provided input into the Project, highlighting a broad range of issues for consideration. Such input from local groups and individuals is important during the development of the Project in order to mitigate adverse impacts to the local community as far as practical. Issues raised have been addressed where feasible to do so and have resulted in a number of modifications to the original layout including:

- Removal of 24 wind turbine locations to the east of the Boco Cluster (as proposed in the initial PEA submitted in September 2008) in response to a neighbouring landowners concerns (Figure 6.1) with respect to:
  - o potential impacts on livestock movement through laneways;
  - perceived aesthetic and noise impacts to the homestead;
  - o impact on an active airstrip (see Chapter 13 Aviation); and
  - o turbine locations proposed within 500 m of the fence line.
- An increase in the geographic scope and scale of the Project with respect greater grid capacity availability and landowner acceptance of the Project north of the MacLaughlin River. (Maintaining the commitments from point one above with respect to the airstrip and proximity to the neighbouring fence line see **Figure 6.1**).
- Relocation of access roads to maximise their utility for both wind farm construction and operation, but also agricultural activities.
- Removal of two wind turbine locations to the west of Avon Lake road with regard to sensitive
  habitat for the endangered Grassland Earless Dragon (discussed further in Chapter 10 Flora and
  Fauna).

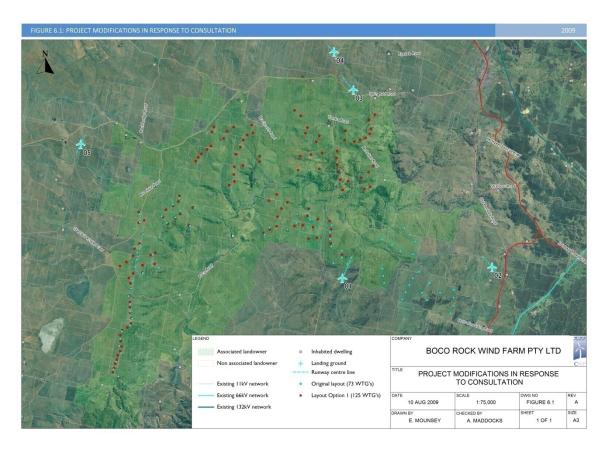


Figure 6.1 Modifications to the Boco Rock Wind Farm (An A3 size version of this Figure is displayed in Volume 2)

Other issues raised by the Key Interest Groups concerned broader aspects of the development that are considered throughout this EA, detailed below in **Table 6.5**.

Table 6.5 Summary of the broader Key Interest Group issues and where addressed within the EA

Key Interest Group	Issue Raised	Addressed
Local Aboriginal Groups	Archaeological and cultural heritage survey participation	Chapter 11
	Visual impact	Chapter 8
	Noise impact	Chapter 9
	Economic value	Chapters 4 and 19
	Community fund	Chapter 19
Neighbouring Residents and Local Community and Businesses	Bushfire risk	Chapter 16
	Greenhouse emissions	Chapter 4
	Dissemination of information	Chapter 6 (this chapter)
	Communication impacts	Chapter 14
	Aviation impacts	Chapter 13

Throughout the Project planning stage Public Opinion Surveys were distributed to Key Interest Group stakeholders. In addition, a "Have Your Say" feature of the website provided the same functionality via a different media to capture stakeholder views, comments and concerns about the Project. The following tables show the number of responses received and their opinion on the proposed development for each question asked.

# Do you approve of wind being used to generate renewable electricity

No Answer	1	3 %
Yes	23	72 %
No	7	22 %
No view	1	3 %
Respondents	32	

# 2. On hearing of our proposal, what was your initial view?

No Answer	0	0 %
I support it	22	69 %
I don't support it	6	19 %
Undecided	4	12 %
Respondents	32	

#### 3. How close do you live to the proposed wind farm?

No Answer	0	0 %
<15km	28	52 %
>15km	26	48 %
Respondents	54	

#### 4. Does the website provide adequate information?

Yes	7	70 %
No	3	30 %
Respondents	10	

Note: Respondents did not always answer each question posed, resulting in a range of respondent sample groups as evident above.

Whilst the number of returned surveys and questionnaires are statistically too small to determine any trend in overall positive or negative support for the wind farm development, they do provide a 'snap shot' into local community views as received.

# 6.4.2 Key Government Consultees

Various environmental stakeholders have provided advice on flora and fauna species of potential significance in the area. Such stakeholders include the DECC, the DPI, the DWE and the Commonwealth DEWHA. Consultation with such agencies is ongoing, with their input into the development process being critical for the appropriate environmental management of the Project site.

In addition to receiving the DGR's for the Project, the DoP also provided broader agency input used in defining assessment requirements. Again, these are summarised below with respect to the relevant chapter of the EA in which the issue is addressed. Moreover, there are a number of additional Key Government Consultees that did not have the opportunity to provide input from the outset. However, through identification and subsequent consultation, their opinions have been sought and are also summarised below.

Generally the requirements of the Key Government Consultees are more prescribed in their nature and easily captured in the general requirement, key assessment and general environmental assessment chapters of this EA.

Table 6.6 Summary of the broader Key Government Consultee issues and where addressed within the EA

Key Government Consultee	Issue Raised	Addressed
Cooma-Monaro Shire Council	Stakeholder Consultation	Chapter 6
	Community fund	Chapter 4 and 19
Bombala Council	Stakeholder Consultation	Chapter 6
	Roads and maintenance	Chapter 12
	Land use conflicts	Chapter 4
	Noise impact	Chapter 9
	Visual impact	Chapter 8
DECC	Water	Chapter 17
	Air quality	Chapter 18
	Noise	Chapter 9
	Greenhouse emissions	Chapter 4
	Waste	Chapter 18
	Construction staging	Chapter 3 and 10

Key Government Consultee	Issue Raised	Addressed
	Contaminated land	Chapter 18
	Threatened species	Chapter 10
	Vegetation clearing	Chapter 10
	Mineral licences	Chapter 19
DPI	Aquatic biodiversity	Chapter 18
	Agricultural management	Chapter 3 and 10
	Water supply	Chapter 3 and 17
DWE	Water courses, riparian corridors and Groundwater Dependant Ecosystems	Chapter 18
	Water supply	Chapter 3 and 17
NOW	Water courses, riparian corridors and Groundwater Dependant Ecosystems	Chapter 18
	Trig. stations	Chapter 18
DoL	Crown lands / Native title	Chapter 18
RTA	Roads and maintenance	Chapter 12
RFS	Fire and bushfire risk	Chapter 16
	Aviation hazard	Chapter 13
DoD	Communication impact	Chapter 14
CASA	Aviation hazard	Chapter 13
AA	Aviation hazard	Chapter 13
DEWHA	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999	Chapter 3 and 10
Southern Rivers CMA	Vegetation clearing	Chapter 10
Transgrid	Grid connection	See below
Country Energy	Grid connection	See below

The Proponent has entered in to a Connection Investigation Agreement (CIA) with Country Energy to progress the connection of the wind farm to the grid. This process is a formal arrangement that

incorporates Transgrid and the Australian Electricity Market Operator (AEMO, formerly National Electricity Market Management Company (NEMMCO)) in determining the electrical connection requirements.

#### 6.4.3 Other Government and Non-Government Organisations

Consultation also occurred with a range of Other Government and Non-Government Organisations, a full list of these stakeholders is provided in **Table 6.3**, in **Section 6.3**.

The Aerial Agricultural Association of Australia (AAAA) provided a response with respect to the proposed impact from the wind farm on neighbouring airstrips. AAAA indicated that, due to internal resource constraints, the organisation was unable to provide a full assessment of the proposed impact. To determine this matter a separate assessment was conducted by consulting with two NSW aerial operators and an aviation risk assessment group, Argus Consulting. A thorough assessment of aviation related hazards in conjunction with the responses received from the DoD, CASA and AA can been seen in **Chapter 13** Aviation.

Some users or managers of various radio communications, telecommunication and television services have provided advice on the likely effect of the proposed wind turbines on their transmission signals. All advice received has been used in conjunction with results of electromagnetic interference studies (see **Chapter 14** Communication) to develop a compliant turbine layout.

# 6.5 Summary

Consultation for the Boco Rock Wind Farm proposal was conducted by way of letters of notification to stakeholders, face-to-face contact with neighbouring residents, a public exhibition and consultation meetings with various stakeholders. The Project website (<a href="www.bocorockwindfarm.com.au">www.bocorockwindfarm.com.au</a>) presents an ongoing, active consultation medium for people to track the development of the Project and provide comment.

Stakeholders included statutory bodies, local interest groups and regional residents. A number of consultees have responded, providing input or advice for the Project which has subsequently resulted in the modification of the Project design.

The public exhibition, held at the Nimmitabel Country Club on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009, was attended by over 100 local and regional residents. Results of the Public Opinion Surveys collected to date show that 69 % of survey respondents supported the Project.

# 6.6 Proposed Transmission Line

The proposed transmission line will be assessed separately to this EA under Part 5 of the *EP&A Act*. However the planning process for the wind farm has involved consultation with landholders that have the potential to be affected by the proposed transmission line connection. As a result of this process, a number of landowners who are opposed to transmission line infrastructure and easements on their land have been identified which in turn have shaped the design of corridors.

Potential transmission line development corridors were identified and presented at the Public Exhibition Open Day to provide local residents and interested stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the proposed routes.

Ongoing consultation and the necessary field surveys are currently underway in preparation of a Review of Environmental Factors.

Country Energy will assess and determine the electricity transmission line in accordance with its statutory obligations as a determining authority under Part 5 of the *EP&A Act* and clause 228 of the *EP&A Regulations*.

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