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Media Release

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A proposed wind farm at the northern end of the Kaimai Ranges will be supplying clean energy to up to 49,000 households in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions.

The proposal is for turbines that will have a hub height of up to 109m with a rotor diameter between 130 and 142m.

The final number of turbines, exact location and size will be determined following further investigation and consultation.

Auckland based company, Ventus Energy (NZ) Ltd, proposes to install 28 wind turbines with an output of 100MW on privately owned farmland.

The company has been investigating the viability for a wind farm in this area since 2005 and is now consulting with local landowners, Iwi, districts' councils and all interested parties.

The company's Director, Glenn Starr, says the windfarm will ensure greater security of electricity supply for the region and will provide construction and maintenance jobs, as well as reduce the nett CO2 emissions from the Waikato.

The site is privately owned and farmed by three land owners. The grid connection will be via the existing Transpower 110kV lines that pass over parts of the site.

Mr Starr says that a successful wind-farm in NZ must have a number of factors in alignment. It must have a strong wind resource, be close to an existing electricity network, have a low/acceptable impact on the environment and the landscape and be of sufficient scale.

“There are very few viable sites close to the major demand centres of Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga that fulfil these criteria.

“In recent years the increased size of modern turbines has reduced the unit cost of electricity. The turbines we are proposing will allow the project to be competitive within the wholesale market pricing. There are a number of projects consented in NZ. However, these are all in the lower half of the North Island or the South Island. They are also for smaller turbines, which are not as financially viable as the new generation machines.

“The timing feels positive to proceed to consultation on the back of 500MW of thermal plant closures in the Waikato and Auckland regions – including Otahuhu Southdown and part of Huntly. There has also been increasing electricity demand driven by strong population growth.

“Given the recent gas and coal generation plant closures, there is now a heightened risk of electricity supply shortages during dry years.

“We have conducted wind resource data collection over many years as well as carrying out investigations on birdlife, geotechnical, archaeology, access, background noise and visibility analyses. Given this, I am confident the proposed windfarm can proceed successfully through the consent process and then through financing and construction.” says Mr Starr.

Auckland based Ventus Energy (NZ) Ltd was formed in 2004 to develop wind energy projects in New Zealand. It is affiliated with Ventus Energy Ltd, an Irish company formed in 2000 which has developed a 7.5MW and a 24MW project in the west of Ireland.

Ventus Energy will be holding a public information day at the Tirohia School hall at a date to be announced soon. Members of the local community and anyone who wants to hear more and ask questions are welcome to attend. The date will be announced on the website: www.kaimaiwind.nz

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