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11th January 2021

Adrienne Meikle
Chief Executive
Commerce Commission
44 The Terrace
WELLINGTON

By email only: adrienne.meikle@comcom.govt.nz

Dear Adrienne

COMMERCE COMMISSION FORMAL PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK – RESPONSE TO LETTER DATED 21ST DECEMBER 2020.

Thanks for your reply to my letter regarding feedback on the Commerce Commission public consultation. I was pleased that you found useful insights in our feedback and that you agreed on several fronts that the consultation could have been more effective.

As both organisations are aware this CPP application has been an involved process extending over many months. At times some of the issues which have arisen have been contentious, exacerbated by the views of a select number of individuals whose agendas remain unclear. As stated in our letter we do agree with you that the sessions could have been more productive and meaningful without some of the behaviour we saw, especially in the early consultation sessions.

We are also pleased to note that the Commerce Commission will carefully consider the information which it relies on resulting from these sessions. We agree that feedback on ongoing consultation with the community is relevant, however we require this to be practicable and reasonable to reflect our current resourcing structure (currently one FTE for all community relations activity). As you can appreciate from your recent consultation, community wide consultation is very resource intensive.

We note your point that Aurora Energy team members were present to defend the views presented at the sessions. To clarify, we had made a previous commitment to our Board and to your team that we would attend as observers only. We do not believe these forums were a productive place to enter into detailed debate on complex matters and/or defend Aurora Energy from various allegations. We have since organised separate meetings with some stakeholders who were in attendance whom we had not formally met previously, to follow up on issues raised by them. We have been able to correct some of the narrative directly in those meetings in a much less heated setting.

We also appreciate you noting the Commission's intention to modify its future process to ensure invited stakeholder sessions are truly representative of the local community. We do appreciate

that this can be a challenging process to get right and a time-consuming task. The recruitment of our Customer Advisory Panel required a sustained effort to get a diverse mix at the table.

As you will be aware, Aurora continues to work with an independent Customer Advisory Panel on an ongoing basis.

Aurora Energy is also committed to learning and much like the Commerce Commission we have taken several lessons from being present at the consultation sessions. Customer and community engagement is an important part of the process and one which Aurora Energy fully supports. We would be happy to work with the Commission after the final determination to provide feedback on any lessons learned.

We thank you for your willingness to accept and respond to our feedback.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sian Sutton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sian Sutton

GM CUSTOMER AND ENGAGEMENT