



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Dr Megan Woods	Portfolio	Energy and Resources
Title of Cabinet paper	Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Dr Megan Woods	Date to be published	12 September 2023

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
July 2023	Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Dr Megan Woods	Office of the Minister of Energy and Resources
31 July 2023	Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Dr Megan Woods CAB-23-MIN-0341 Minute	Cabinet Office

Information redacted

NO

Any information redacted in this document is redacted in accordance with MBIE's policy on Proactive Release and is labelled with the reason for redaction. This may include information that would be redacted if this information was requested under Official Information Act 1982. Where this is the case, the reasons for withholding information are listed below. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

In Confidence

Office of the Minister of Energy and Resources

Chair, Cabinet

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Dr Megan Woods

- 1 I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Seattle and San Francisco in the United States of America from 13 to 20 August 2023 to attend the APEC Energy Ministers Meeting.

Purpose of Travel

- 2 The primary purpose of my visit is to attend the APEC Energy Ministers Meeting in Seattle, where it is expected a new APEC wide goal to decarbonise electricity systems will be agreed. I also propose to undertake a short programme of additional meetings to foster innovation and investment links in the energy and resources sector.

APEC Energy Ministers Meeting

- 3 This is the first APEC Energy Ministers Meeting since 2015. The Energy Ministerial is one of the key priority ministerial meetings indicated by the United States (US) for their APEC host year, and the importance they are placing on this is reinforced by the fact the US Cabinet level Secretary of Energy Jennifer M. Granholm will be hosting the meeting.
- 4 The meeting will provide an important opportunity to:
 - 4.1 support the US's objective of agreeing to a new and more ambitious APEC wide electricity decarbonisation target, sending international signals about the need to decarbonise, particularly to those APEC economies that have substantially less renewables than New Zealand;
 - 4.2 demonstrate the importance New Zealand places on decarbonisation of electricity systems across the APEC Region and encourage other member economies to take action, in order to reach our Paris Agreement commitments;
 - 4.3 highlight internationally, the significant progress New Zealand has made toward decarbonisation of our own electricity grid and wider energy system;
 - 4.4 seek bilateral discussions with several APEC region Ministerial energy counterparts.

- 5 Attendance at this meeting will also provide important Ministerial level support for our bilateral relationship with the US. Links between US and New Zealand energy companies are growing, and we share similar policy objectives. The Biden Administration has made renewables and decarbonisation a major focus, significantly through the adoption of the Inflation Reduction Act. This legislation includes multi-billion-dollar investments in decarbonising the US energy system, and technology development. It has some parallel objectives to our own Government programmes such as Government Investment in Decarbonising Industry (GIDI), Warmer Kiwi Homes (WKH) for insulation and efficient heating, and our initiatives to foster small scale renewable energy use in homes and communities in New Zealand. I expect to hear about the US experience on the deployment of these programmes and share our own insights from NZ.
- 6 I will also be able to continue to advocate bilaterally for closer ties between New Zealand and US energy companies who are at the cutting edge of innovation and commercialisation of solutions to the energy challenges we face, as we move toward a low emissions economy. This includes through the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework negotiations, where clean economy supply chain cooperation is being discussed.
- 7 My attendance is also an opportunity to reinforce wider bilateral themes to the US, particularly how their engagement in the trade and economic architecture of the Indo-Pacific region is vitally important to maintain regional stability and economic well-being.

Short programme of industry engagements

- 8 While in the US I propose to undertake a short programme of industry and research visits in the Seattle and San Francisco region in order to further New Zealand's energy decarbonisation objectives and cement links between New Zealand and US energy companies and innovators. I intend to seek the following meetings:
 - 8.1 *Breakthrough Energy*: Breakthrough Energy is a non-governmental organisation headquartered in Seattle, which is led by Bill Gates and several other international investors to rapidly accelerate the energy transition. I intend to meet with Breakthrough Energy to get the latest insight into technology options for New Zealand's decarbonisation journey and explore potential inward investment and collaboration options.
 - 8.2 *Amazon Climate Pledge*: Alongside more than 400 other major international companies, Amazon has pledged to implement a decarbonisation strategy in line with the Paris Agreement through business change and innovation, and also to neutralise any remaining emissions with offsets to achieve net-zero annual carbon emissions by 2040. I intend to meet with the Amazon team to understand how they will decarbonise such a large multinational before 2050, to inform New Zealand's own approach.

- 8.3 *(Google) X*: I intend to visit San Francisco to re-engage with X and support their relationship with Ara Ake, New Zealand’s energy innovation centre. X is Google’s “moonshot” factory, that harnesses digital data and a multi-disciplinary approach to solve global challenges. Our Government, both directly and through Ara Ake, has been developing a partnership with X on energy grid modelling.
- 8.4 *Stanford University Precourt Institute for Energy Research*: Stanford University is undertaking globally leading research in areas relevant to New Zealand’s energy transition. This includes new battery technologies for grid-scale and long-duration energy storage, hydrogen and other renewable and energy efficiency including in buildings.
- 8.5 *Principle Power* is a San Francisco based wind energy developer with an innovative approach to floating turbines. The Government is currently developing a regulatory regime for offshore renewables to ensure New Zealand makes the most of its enormous potential as we transition to a decarbonised energy system and meet our Emissions Reduction Plan commitments. I intend to find out more about the projects it has operating around the world.

Ministerial Party

- 9 I will be accompanied by one staff member from my Office, whose costs will be met by Vote: Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel.
- 10 I will also be accompanied by one official from MBIE. Travel costs for the MBIE official will be met by MBIE (Vote: Business, Science and Innovation).
- 11 I also expect I will be accompanied by one official from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA). These travel costs will be met by EECA.

Travel Costs

- 12 I propose to leave New Zealand on Sunday 13 August and return on Sunday 20 August, allowing me 5 days on the ground in the USA.

- 13 List the estimated costs of the travel:

Airfares: (two people)	\$26,400.00
Accommodation: (two people)	\$6,000.00
Other expenses:	\$19,700.00
Contingency (15%)	\$7,800.00
Total:	\$59,600.00

- 14 The US are providing hospitality packages for the Ministerial meetings in Seattle. The US Department of Energy will pay up to \$500 per minister per night (inclusive of taxes and fees) for up to three nights (Aug 14, 15, 16).

Acting Ministers

- 15 The following Ministers will be acting for me:
- 15.1 The acting Minister of Housing will be Hon Jackson – 13th - midnight 17th August and Hon Edmonds midnight 17th-20th August
 - 15.2 The acting Minister of Energy and Resources will be Hon David Parker
 - 15.3 The acting Minister for Building and Construction will be Hon Peeni Henare
 - 15.4 The acting Minister for Infrastructure will be Hon McAnulty
 - 15.5 Associate Finance portfolio reverts to lead Minister Hon Robertson
- 16 The House is sitting during my absence, and I am seeking leave from the Party Whip.

Proactive release

- 17 I plan to release this paper in part within 30 business days. All redactions will be made in line with the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

The Minister of Energy and Resources recommends that the Committee:

- 1 authorise my absence from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured from 13 to 20 August 2023 to attend the APEC Energy Ministers Meeting in the United States of America;
- 2 agree that I be accompanied by one staff member;
- 3 approve the estimated expenditure of \$59,600.00 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party, as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs Members of the Executive – Travel;
- 4 note that the US are providing hospitality packages for the Ministerial meetings in Seattle;
- 5 note that I will be accompanied by one official from MBIE and one official from EECA whose travel costs will be met by their respective agencies;
- 6 agree that in my absence:
 - 6.1 Hon Jackson acts as Minister of Housing from 13th – midnight 17th August 2023
 - 6.2 Hon Barbara Edmonds acts as Minister of Housing from midnight 17th – 20th August 2023

- 6.3 Hon David Parker acts as Minister of Energy & Resources
 - 6.4 Hon Peeni Henare acts as Minister for Building and Construction
 - 6.5 Hon McAnulty acts as Minister of Infrastructure
 - 6.6 Associate Finance portfolio reverts to lead Minister Hon Robertson
- 7 note that leave from Parliament has been sought from the Party Whip.
- 8 note that I will be absent from Cabinet on Monday 14 August 2023.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Dr Megan Woods

Minister of Housing
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister for Building and Construction
Associate Minister of Finance