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Hon Dr Wayne Mapp
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

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International Partnership on Geothermal Technology

Dear Minister,

The New Zealand Geothermal Association (NZGA) would like to offer both encouragement and support for New Zealand joining the International Partnership on Geothermal Technology (IPGT). The link has to be at a government-government level, but we would be willing to help in developing the case, and can confirm that the diverse membership that we represent is strongly supportive of this initiative.

The NZGA is an independent, non-profit association that provides information on geothermal phenomena and utilisation for industry, government and educational organisations. In addition, the NZGA, as a member of the International Geothermal Association, contributes to the international exchange of information within the geothermal development industry. NZGA membership comprises participants, regulators, and interested parties within the geothermal community. It totals 282 members currently.

As you will be well aware, the growth of geothermal utilisation in New Zealand has expanded strongly in recent years. Over the past five years we have moved from around 7% of total electricity generation from geothermal sources to the current 13%. The value of this indigenous resource is becoming more widely recognised and further growth is planned. New Zealand now holds 7th place in MWe generated from geothermal sources and we are in 4th place in terms of percentage of total generation.

New Zealand held World leadership in geothermal technology in the 1960s and we are again receiving international recognition of our expertise and leadership. Our scientists and engineers are again working in a large number of new projects, in at least 20 countries.

To maintain our leadership, and expand our international involvement in geothermal technology transfer around the World, it is essential that we develop strong research partnerships with other countries. The US government is investing US\$400 million in geothermal research and development, so it would clearly be advantageous to have access to this substantial research effort. The US is the leading proponent for the IPGT, along with Australia and Iceland, and has invited New Zealand to join. Discussions on the possibility of New Zealand joining this leading research and development initiative in geothermal technology have now been underway for the last two years. In the intervening time we have had representatives from New Zealand industry (GNS Science, University of Auckland, and Mighty River Power) attend meetings in an observer status or hold briefing meetings in parallel with IPGT meetings. The Past President of the NZGA met with senior US Government officers of the DOE in April this year in the company of a MoRST representative. The invitation to join was again forthcoming from the US. We point out that this demonstrates the partnering desired in research and development initiatives between researchers and industry.

The NZGA has recognised that the interests of the IPGT will forward our national long term geothermal research and development goals. In addition, New Zealand companies are currently sought after for consulting services and we do not want to lose our international competitive advantage by being left out of the mainstream of geothermal innovation. There are minimal costs with

involvement. Consequently, the NZGA has advocated for New Zealand membership of this partnership on behalf of industry for some time. Last year we were part of a joint meeting between MoRST and MED to progress this. Another year has passed, though we understand that a path forward is now clearer. Please let us know if there is any practical means by which we can assist.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B R' followed by a long horizontal line.

Brian White
Executive Officer
New Zealand Geothermal Association