



PROACTIVE RELEASE COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Penny Simmonds	Portfolio	Environment
Name of package	Space Vehicle Jettison Debris	Date to be published	20/10/2025

List of documents that have been proactively released

Date	Title	Author
26/07/2025	BRF-6401 – Aide Memoire: Options for increasing the rocket launch limit	Ministry for the Environment
23/07/2025	BRF-6058 – Cover briefing for CAB-587: Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone	Ministry for the Environment
6/08/2025	BRF-6621 – CAB-587: Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone	Ministry for the Environment
	BRF-6621 – Appendix 2: Talking points for ECO on 20 August 2025	Ministry for the Environment
28/08/2025	BRF-6717 – Space vehicle jettison debris – Next Steps	Ministry for the Environment
	BRF-6717 – Appendix 1: Letters to Iwi and Māori Groups	Ministry for the Environment
	BRF-6717 – Appendix 2: Letters to persons with existing interests	Ministry for the Environment
10/09/2025	BRF-6800 – Space vehicle jettison debris – results of the Ecological Risk Assessment	Ministry for the Environment
26/09/2025	BRF-6773 – Space vehicle jettison debris – Approval to consult	Ministry for the Environment
	BRF-6773 – Appendix 2: Other Existing Interests	Ministry for the Environment

Information redacted **YES** **NO**

Any information redacted in this document is redacted in accordance with the Ministry for the Environment'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.

Summary of reasons for redaction

Some information has been withheld from BRF-6401, BRF-6508, and BRF-6773 under Section 9(2)(h) of the Official Information Act, as they contain legally privileged information.

Some information has been withheld from BRF-6401 under Section 9(2)(b) of the Official Information Act, as it contains commercially sensitive information.

Some information has been withheld from BRF-6508 and BRF-6773 under Section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Official Information Act, as it contains free and frank advice.

Some information has been withheld from BRF-6401 under Section 9(2)(ba) of the Official Information Act, as it contains confidential information.



Aide memoire: Options for increasing the rocket launch limit

Date submitted: 26 June 2025

Tracking number: BRF-6401

Security level: In-Confidence

Actions sought from ministers	
<i>Name and position</i>	<i>Action sought</i>
To Hon Penny SIMMONDS Minister for the Environment	For noting only

Appendices and attachments
Nil

Key contacts at Ministry for the Environment			
<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Cell phone</i>	<i>First contact</i>
Principal Author	Pierre Tellier		
Responsible Manager	Matthew Barbati-Ross	022 010 2147	
General Manager	Jo Gascoigne	027 531 7202	✓

Options for increasing the rocket launch limit

Purpose

1. This aide memoire provides information on options to more quickly increase the number of space vehicle (rocket) launches allowed under the Exclusive Economic Zone (Environmental Effects) Regulations 2013 (the Regulations) to give more certainty for the space and advanced aviation industry.
2. You have asked for an initial view on options; further work to refine the preferred option will be needed.

Background

3. On 5 June 2025, we provided you (by email) with summary information on changing the Regulations to increase the rocket launch limit. This noted making changes would take five to eight months. You have asked for further information on options for a faster process to increase the launch limit instead of the review process provided by the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 (EEZ Act).
4. There is currently a 100-launch limit for jettison of rocket debris on the seabed under the Regulations. The limit applies for all operators. There are currently two operators in New Zealand—Rocket Lab and UC Aerospace
5. This limit is expected to be reached in late 2026. Any launches beyond the limit require a marine consent. Marine consents can take at least six months to process and are cost recoverable.
6. The space and advanced aviation sector contributes \$2.47b to the New Zealand economy annually. The sector has grown 8.9% annually since 2019. The New Zealand Space and Advanced Aviation Strategy 2024¹ aims to double the size of the space and advanced aviation sector by 2030.
7. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Work is underway with MBIE to provide certainty to the sector

8. A review of the EEZ regulations (the Review) to consider the needs of the rocket industry and statutory requirements under the EEZ Act is already underway. This can

¹ [New Zealand Space and Advanced Aviation Strategy 2024 to 2030 | Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment](#)

provide long-term certainty to the space and advanced aviation sector while ensuring environmental sustainability.

9. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
10. The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) has commissioned NIWA to update the ERA that will form the basis for policy development. This will be completed in September 2025 and does not materially impact the timeframes for the current Review.
11. MfE and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) anticipate the Review will be complete by May 2026, subject to Cabinet decisions. The Review will amend the Regulations before actual launches reach the limit and allow operators to continue their activity without having to obtain a marine consent under the EEZ Act.
12. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Options for a faster process to increase the launch limit

13. We understand that you wish to consider options for increasing the launch limit to 200 launches per year and for this to be in place by late 2025.
14. There are four options for a faster process to increase the launch limit instead of the Review, with varying benefits and risks (Table One refers).

Table One - Options for an alternative faster process

<i>Option</i>	<i>Indicative timeframe</i>	<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Risks</i>
Option One Amend the Regulations through an Omnibus bill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depends on the legislative timeframe of an Omnibus bill. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could be changed quickly as it could be added as an amendment paper at the Committee of the Whole House stage of an Omnibus, if there is scope to do so. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is not an Omnibus Bill with sufficient scope available to enable this within the desired timeframes. The Resource Management (Consenting and Other System Changes) Amendment Bill could be turned into an Omnibus Bill at the Committee of the Whole House stage. However that would require approval of the Business Committee or leave of the House, and it would be difficult to articulate a "single broad policy" that covers both what the Bill currently does and rockets. This would likely have implications for the timing of the progressing of the Bill. If the Omnibus Bill is delayed, it could delay the change to the Regulations.

- 4

Options for increasing the launch limit

17. There are three options for increasing the launch limit: adding a set number of launches per year, adding a set number of launches, or changing how launches are defined to switch to tonnage rather than a set number of launches (Table Two refers).

18. [REDACTED]

Table Two - Options for increasing the launch limit

<i>Option</i>	<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Risks</i>
Option A Increase limit to a set number of launches per year (eg, 200 per year).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides ongoing certainty for operators and reduces the need for further review of the Regulations for the foreseeable future (ie, until more than 200 launches per year are required). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially harder to evidence based on currently available information. Some environmental risk: The 2017 risk assessment considered 100 launches the limit for minor effects on the environment, based on 40-tonne rockets. The 2016 risk assessment considered 1000 launches to be the limit based on one-tonne rockets. Rocket Lab currently use one-tonne rockets. Risks related to breach of the EEZ Act processes could be addressed if a bill also made changes to the primary legislation. Potential concerns from the wider public, Treaty Partners and affected parties.
Option B Increase limit by a set number (ie, 200 in total).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides certainty for operators, but less than option A. Can be either a set number or an amount per year for a set number of years. The scope is narrow which minimises risks of making change ahead of the receiving the most up to date information in the ERA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially easier to evidence based on currently available information. Risks related to breach of the EEZ Act processes could be addressed if a bill also made changes to the primary legislation. Potential concerns from the wider public, Treaty Partners and affected parties. Temporary measure as the number of extra launches is finite. Would likely mean the further review of the regulations will need to occur sooner than Option A (ie, the 200 launch limit could be met sooner).
Option C Change focus from number of launches to amount of material deposited for remaining launches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides certainty for operators but less than option A. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially harder to evidence based on currently available information. Temporary measure as the number of extra launches is finite. Risks related to breach of the EEZ Act processes could be addressed if a bill also made changes to the primary legislation.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential concerns from the wider public, Treaty Partners and affected parties.• The EPA (as the regulator) would have to tally the amount of material deposited rather and could incur a greater operational cost.
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19. We consider that the best pathway forwards is further consideration of Option Two and Option B. Together, these options could provide for a targeted change by late 2025 however further analysis of potential timelines (including PCO and House availability) and risks is required before we can confirm there is a viable pathway in practice.
20. Further analysis can also consider your responsibilities under Treaty settlement legislation. We can also engage with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade on relevant international obligations.

We are continuing to work with MBIE

21. In the meantime, we are continuing to work with MBIE on the Review to ensure that this pathway for increasing the launch limit is available if you do not wish to further consider alternative options. The ERA can also inform the supporting analysis for alternative options in due course.
22. There is the potential for the ERA to confirm that the effect of rocket launches at a certain level are no more than minor. This means you can make a non-notified change to the Regulations which could potentially be in place by late 2025. However, there is some uncertainty to this pathway as it is dependent on the outcome of the ERA. We can provide further advice on this pathway in late August/September 2025.

Next steps

- 23. You may wish to discuss the above options with the Minister for Space.
- 24. You may wish to discuss House time availability and priority with the leader of the House, Hon Chris Bishop.
- 25. You may wish to direct officials to provide you with further advice on one or more options.

Signatures



Jo Gascoigne
General Manager
Resource Management System
26 June 2025

Hon Penny SIMMONDS
Minister for the Environment
Date



Briefing: Cover briefing for CAB-587: Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone

Date submitted: 23 July 2025

Tracking number: BRF-6508

Security level: In-Confidence

MfE priority: Urgent

Actions sought from Ministers

<i>Name and position</i>	<i>Action sought</i>	<i>Response by</i>
To Hon Penny SIMMONDS Minister for the Environment	Approve the draft Cabinet Paper for Ministerial consultation	28 July 2025
CC Hon Judith COLLINS Minister for Space	Note the contents of the briefing	n/a

Actions for Minister's office staff

Undertake Ministerial consultation on the enclosed draft Cabinet paper, once any required amendments have been made.

Return the signed briefing to the Ministry for the Environment (ema.pct@mfe.govt and advice@mfe.govt.nz).

Appendices and attachments

1. Cabinet paper: *Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone*

Key contacts at Ministry for the Environment

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Cell phone</i>	<i>First contact</i>
Principal Author	Bonnie Hartfield		
Responsible Manager	Matthew Barbati-Ross	022 010 2147	
General Manager	Jo Gascoigne	027 531 7202	✓

Minister's comments

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Cover briefing for CAB-587: Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone

Key messages

1. The launch deposition limit for space vehicle jettison debris under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects – Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 (the EEZ regulations) is going to be breached in 2026. This now requires action to support continued growth of the space sector within environmental limits.
2. In June, we provided you with advice on options for changing the space vehicle jettison debris limit [BRF-6401 refers]. We understand your preference is to review the EEZ regulations to provide an immediate solution. A discrete, targeted change to the regulations can be in place by December 2025.
3. There are statutory requirements to meet when reviewing regulations. You have obligations when making or amending regulations under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 (EEZ Act). These include consultation and notification requirements, matters to consider (such as principles of the Treaty of Waitangi), and information requirements.
4. We have provided a draft Cabinet Paper (**Appendix 1**) based on a targeted change. This seeks delegation to approve consultation, make policy decisions, and approve drafting instructions for amendments to the regulations. Seeking delegated decision-making from Cabinet in August/September to progress a review in consultation with the Minister for Space will enable regulations to be in place this year.
5. To manage risks from working at pace, you have the option to return to Cabinet if the changes are significant, requiring more Cabinet discussion or PCO time for drafting.
6. We recommend that you provide feedback on the draft Cabinet paper and progress Ministerial consultation. We will provide you with a final Cabinet paper for lodgement on 14 August 2025 for consideration by the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee (ECO) on 20 August 2025.

Recommendations

We recommend that you:

- a. **agree** your intention to review the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects – Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 for space vehicle jettison debris

Yes | No

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

- b. **agree** your preferred approach to the regulation review is to work towards an immediate solution to be in place by December 2025

Yes | No

- c. **agree** to provide feedback on the draft Cabinet paper

Yes | No

- d. **agree** to Ministerial consultation on the draft Cabinet paper following your feedback

Yes | No

- e. **agree** your intention to lodge a final copy of the Cabinet paper for consideration at the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee on 20 August.

Yes | No

Signatures



Jo Gascoigne
General Manager – Resource Management System
Environmental Management and Adaptation
23/07/2025

Hon Penny SIMMONDS
Minister for the Environment

Cover briefing for CAB-587: Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone

Purpose

1. This briefing seeks decisions on reviewing the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects – Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 (the EEZ regulations) and seeks your approval for Ministerial consultation on the draft Cabinet Paper *Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone* (CAB-587).

Background

2. There is a 100-launch deposition limit for debris jettisoned by space vehicles in New Zealand to manage environmental effects in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Continental Shelf under the EEZ regulations.
3. The space and advanced aviation sector in New Zealand is growing rapidly, contributing \$2.47bn to the New Zealand economy annually. We have been advised by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and space vehicle operators that the demand for launches in New Zealand and globally is increasing.
4. This growth means the launch deposition limit under the EEZ regulations will be reached in late 2026. Any further launches above the limit will require a marine consent. Additionally, as launch frequency increases, the cumulative and long-term impacts on the marine environment may become more significant and warrant review.

Analysis and advice

The launch deposition limit is going to be breached in 2026 and requires action now

5. The New Zealand space market has grown 53% since 2019, with year-on-year growth of 8.9%. The Government has supported this growth through the *National Space Policy* in 2023 and has ambitions to double the size of the sector in the *Space and Advanced Aviation Strategy 2024 – 2030*.
6. To support continued growth of the space sector within environmental limits and provide investment certainty for existing and potential space vehicle operators, the launch deposition limit needs to be reviewed as soon as possible.

A targeted change can be in place by December 2025, providing an immediate solution

7. There are different ways that the EEZ regulations may be reshaped to support continued growth of the space and advanced aviation sector within environmental limits and

current international obligations. In June 2025, we provided you with advice on options for changing the launch deposition limit [BRF-6401 refers].

8. We understand your preference is to progress a review of the EEZ regulations. There are two options for this.
 - i Option 1: An immediate solution to address near-term capacity constraints, which could be in place by December 2025 through delegating decision-making from Cabinet.
 - ii Option 2: An immediate solution to address near-term capacity constraints, but without delegated decision-making from Cabinet would not be in place until March 2026 at the earliest.
9. Indicative timeframes for Option 1 are based on Parliamentary Counsel Office (PCO) drafting capacity and Cabinet prioritisation in December 2025. There may be delays to the timeframe for delivery if Cabinet time or PCO capacity are limited.
10. The immediate solution would be targeted and narrow in scope, enabling a discrete change to the regulations. Policy decisions will be based on the results of a two-week public consultation in conjunction with targeted engagement, as well as an updated Ecological Risk Assessment. Broader effects of space vehicle launches, such as those in the territorial sea or on land, are not within the scope of the review.
11. A more comprehensive review of the EEZ regulations to provide a longer-term solution would require more policy work and a longer consultation period. Waiting to complete a more comprehensive review may negatively impact the space and advanced aviation sector, as launches are booked a year in advance. Operators may not wish to book launches if there is uncertainty around the ability to launch, impacting commercial and research activity.
12. When the work to provide an immediate solution has developed further, officials can provide you with advice on whether a longer-term solution is needed.
13. The key difference between Option 1 and 2 is delegated decision making from Cabinet. We understand your preference is for Option 1, with further advice on a longer-term solution to be provided at a later date.

There are statutory requirements to meet when reviewing regulations and implications for working at pace

14. The process for creating or amending regulations, including matters which you must consider, are detailed in the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 (EEZ Act). We have outlined how Option 1 can meet these requirements in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Indicative timeline for regulation review	
Requirement	How this requirement can be met
s12 – In order to recognise and respect the Crown’s responsibility to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi for the purposes of the Act, s32 requires that a process gives iwi adequate time and	Targeted early engagement with Iwi with EEZ settlement intersections will take place before public engagement. Engaging with Iwi/Māori early in the policy process will ensure iwi are given adequate time and opportunity to comment.

opportunity to comment on the subject matter of proposed regulations.	
s32 – Establish and use a process that gives public, iwi authorities, and persons whose existing interests are likely to be affected adequate notification, time and opportunity to comment on the subject matter of proposed regulations	Targeted engagement with iwi/Māori, relevant stakeholders, and industry will begin once approved by you. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
s33 – Matters you must take into account when developing regulations. These matters include effects on the environment, effects on existing interests in the EEZ, international obligations, economic benefit to New Zealand, and other environmental matters	Officials will provide advice on matters you must take into account when developing regulations at the policy decisions stage. This includes consideration of the Ecological Risk Assessment, targeted engagement, and public consultation.
s34 – You must base decisions on best available information when developing regulations. If information is adequate or uncertain, you must favour environmental caution and protection.	By using the results of the Ecological Risk Assessment alongside information gathered during consultation, we will be able to provide adequate information for decision-making.

15. The EEZ Act gives effect to New Zealand's international obligations in the EEZ. Following the process for creating or amending regulations will ensure that regulations align with our international obligations.

Seeking delegated responsibility from Cabinet in August/September will ensure timely decision-making in consultation with the Minister for Space

16. In order to review the regulations at pace, we recommend requesting Cabinet delegation for approval to consult, make policy decisions, and issue drafting instructions to PCO.
17. Delegating responsibilities will support timely decision-making, enabling amended regulations to be in force by late December 2025. This will also enable you to meet the requirements of the EEZ Act during the review.
18. We suggest consulting with the Minister for Space when making delegated decisions. This will ensure any changes align with Space portfolio priorities.
19. We have drafted a Cabinet Paper for Option 1 (**Appendix 1**). We recommend approving Ministerial consultation with the intention of lodging a final Cabinet paper on 14 August for consideration by the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee (ECO) on 20 August. Cabinet then meets on 8 September to confirm committee decisions.
20. The Ministry for Regulation has waived the requirement for a regulatory impact statement for this Cabinet paper. This waiver is based on the development of a decision document which enables effective consultation and the development of future impact analysis. A full regulatory impact statement will be provided during policy decision making.
21. An indicative timeline for the review can be found in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Indicative timeline for regulation review

Milestone/Activity	Timeframe
ECO meeting	20 August
Targeted early engagement	Week beginning 25 August
Ecological Risk Assessment completed	Week beginning 25 August
Cabinet meeting	8 September
Public consultation	Late September / early October
Delegated policy decisions and issue drafting instructions	November 2025
Draft regulations considered by Cabinet Legislation Committee	Early December 2025
Regulations in Force	Late December 2025

Te Tiriti analysis

22. The EEZ Act outlines how the Minister for the Environment gives effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi for the purposes of the Act. The Minister must establish and use a process that gives iwi adequate time and opportunity to comment on the subject matter of proposed regulations.
23. We have identified iwi with interests in the space and advanced aviation sector generally, as well as those with interests in the area where space vehicle jettison debris deposition takes place. Ngāi Tahu and Ngāti Porou have interests in the area where space vehicle jettison debris take place.
24. Consultation once the identification and determination of proposal or issues to be consulted on is required under the Ngāti Porou relationship accord. The Ngāi Tahu Expectations for Crown Engagement also outlines expectations for early engagement during the issue identification process.
25. Māori also have fisheries interests in the EEZ through the 1992 Fisheries Settlement. This includes stakes in fisheries companies, customary fishing rights and allocated commercial quota rights. Te Ohu Kaimoana is an independent Māori Trust established under the Maori Fisheries Act 2004. It was established to advance the interests of Māori in fishing and fisheries-related activities and to return fisheries assets and funds from the Fisheries Settlement to iwi organisations.
26. To help you meet the requirements of section 32 of the EEZ Act regarding notification and consultation, we suggest undertaking targeted early engagement with the Post Settlement Government Entities for Ngāti Porou and Ngāi Tahu, as well as Te Ohu Kaimoana as soon as practicable, ideally ahead of public consultation. This will help inform the analysis of policy options and public consultation materials.

Other considerations

Consultation and engagement

27. This briefing and the attached draft Cabinet paper have been prepared in collaboration with the New Zealand Space Agency, an agency within the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment.
28. We have discussed the approach to reviewing the regulations with the Department of Conservation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry for Primary Industries and Ministry of Transport.
29. We will undertake Departmental consultation on the draft Cabinet paper alongside Ministerial consultation and provide you with a final paper on 7 August 2025 for lodgement by 14 August 2025.
30. We suggest that targeted engagement also occurs with interested parties, such as rocket launch operators, fisheries operators and previous submitters as soon as practicable. We will provide further advice on this in due course.

Risks and mitigations

To manage risks, you have the option to return to Cabinet if the changes are likely to be significant, requiring more Cabinet or PCO time, or increasing the risks for your statutory decision-making

31. The indicative timeline for the regulation review is dependent on prioritisation on the Cabinet agenda and PCO capacity. There may be delays to the timeframe for delivery if Cabinet time or PCO capacity are limited.
32. [REDACTED]
33. [REDACTED]
34. We will seek approval to begin targeted engagement by the middle of August. We will provide you with further advice on timeframes for public consultation after Cabinet have made decisions on the paper. To meet the requirements for consultation under the EEZ Act, we will prioritise targeted early engagement with Iwi/Māori and stakeholders with existing interests in the area.

35. As Option 1 is a targeted review of the regulations, there is potential for feedback from engagement and consultation to expand beyond the matters within scope under the EEZ Act. This may also generate media interest. Ensuring the consultation and engagement plan are well-scoped and stakeholders are well-informed of the purpose of the review will mitigate this. Matters out of scope, including matters regulated by other legislation, can be reported back to Cabinet as part of information on a longer-term solution.
36. There is a risk that findings from the Ecological Risk Assessment and consultation indicate a more significant change to the regulations than can be progressed through Option 1. The draft Cabinet paper includes an option to return to Cabinet if the changes required are significant and warrant further discussion.

Legal issues

37. [REDACTED]

Financial, regulatory and legislative implications

38. No financial, regulatory, or legislative implications are associated with the proposals in this briefing.

Next steps

39. Once you have provided feedback, we will provide you an updated draft Cabinet paper for Ministerial consultation. We suggest a consultation period of five days.
40. A timeline for next steps can be found in **Table 3**. We will provide you with a final copy of the Cabinet paper by 7 August, for lodgement by 14 August 2025 for consideration at ECO on 20 August 2025. We will also provide you with talking points for ECO.

Table 3: Next steps	
<i>Milestone/Activity</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>
Ministerial consultation on Cabinet paper	30 July – 5 August
Departmental consultation on Cabinet paper	30 July – 5 August
Revised paper sent to your office	7 August
Paper lodged for ECO meeting	14 August
ECO meeting	20 August
Cabinet meeting	8 September



CAB-587: Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone

Date submitted: 6 August 2025

Tracking number: BRF-6621

Security level: In-Confidence

MfE priority: Urgent

Actions sought from ministers		
<i>Name and position</i>	<i>Action sought</i>	<i>Response by</i>
To Hon Penny SIMMONDS Minister for the Environment	Approve lodgement of CAB-587 on 14 August 2025 by 10am for discussion at ECO on 20 August 2025	11 August 2025

Appendices and attachments
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix 1: CAB-587: <i>Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone</i> Appendix 2: Talking points for ECO on 20 August 2025

Key contacts at Ministry for the Environment			
<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Cell phone</i>	<i>First contact</i>
Principal Author	Bonnie Hartfield		
Responsible Manager	Matthew Barbati-Ross	022 010 2147	
Director	Jo Gascoigne	027 531 7202	✓

Minister's comments

CAB-587: Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone

Purpose

1. This briefing seeks your agreement to lodge the updated Cabinet paper *Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone* (**Appendix 1**) for consideration at the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee (ECO) on 20 August 2025.
2. This briefing provides a summary of feedback from Ministerial and Departmental consultation, as well as talking points (**Appendix 2**) to support you at the meeting.
3. Ministry for the Environment officials will be present to support you at ECO on 20 August 2025, if required.

Ministerial feedback summary

4. The Minister for Space requested removal of “in concurrence with the Minister for Space” from the first line of the recommendations. This change has been made.

Departmental feedback summary

5. Feedback from Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), Ministry of Defence, Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), Ministry for Regulation and Te Puni Kōkiri required no changes.
6. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and Ministry of Transport (MOT) requested minor wording changes to improve clarity. These changes have been made.
7. Te Tari Whakatau highlighted the need to consult customary marine title and protected customary rights applicants, as well as the hapū/iwi of the Chatham Islands. These changes have been made to the Cabinet paper, and we have added these groups to our consultation and engagement plan.

Recommendations

We recommend that you:

- a. **agree** to lodge the Cabinet paper on 14 August 2025 for consideration by the Cabinet ECO Committee on 20 August 2025.

Yes | No

Signatures



Jo Gascoigne
General Manager – Resource Management System
Environmental Management and Adaptation
6 August 2025

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment
Date

Appendix 2: Talking points for ECO on 20 August 2025

- I am seeking Cabinet delegation for approval to consult, make policy decisions, and approve drafting instructions for review of the space vehicle jettison debris regulations.
- In 2017, regulations were introduced allowing space vehicles (rockets) to jettison debris into the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) without needing to apply for consent each time. A limit of 100 permitted rocket launches was set to protect the environment.
- The EEZ Act and regulations are just one part of the bigger picture when it comes to regulating launches. Whether a rocket gets permission to launch is decided under the Outer Space and High-altitude Activities Act. Any effects on land or in coastal waters are managed under the Resource Management Act.
- The EEZ regulations don't decide if a specific rocket can launch – they only manage how much rocket debris ends up in the ocean. The 'launch limit' is a way to control the total amount of material that is dropped based on 100 standard-sized rockets.
- Since 2017, New Zealand's space and advanced aviation sector has grown significantly, and the limit is expected to be reached next year.
- Any further launches would require a fully notified marine consent. This would impose significant costs and time delays on the sector.
- An increase to the limit is urgently needed to provide investment certainty and support continued growth in the sector. We will need to both work at pace and meet statutory requirements.
- The assumptions that underpinned the original limit have changed (eg, the average rocket size is smaller than anticipated), creating scope to consider increasing the cap within environmental limits.
- The immediate focus is on a quick change to regulations this year to raise the limit as a near-term solution to the current urgent issue.
- When I return to Cabinet, I will provide further advice on whether a longer-term solution is required to further enable growth of the sector. This advice will consider changes to the EEZ Act and regulations, including whether a limit is needed at all.
- Any increase to the limit will be informed by an updated Ecological Risk Assessment (reporting in September 2025) and public consultation. Any

changes will be designed to ensure that Treaty settlement responsibilities are upheld.

- I will also undertake targeted engagement with Post Settlement Governance Entities, current space vehicle operators (Rocket Lab and University of Canterbury Aerospace), and existing interests in the launch debris area including industry (such as commercial fisheries and permit holders for minerals exploitation).
- I will return to Cabinet in December 2025 with drafted regulations for approval in December 2025.



Space vehicle jettison debris review - Next steps

Date submitted: 28 August 2025

Tracking number: BRF-6717

Security level: In-Confidence

MfE priority: Urgent

Actions sought from Ministers		
<i>Name and position</i>	<i>Action sought</i>	<i>Response by</i>
To Hon Penny SIMMONDS Minister for the Environment	Agree to begin targeted consultation and send letters to Treaty partners and persons with existing interests.	4 September 2025

Actions for Minister's office staff
<p>Forward this briefing to Hon Judith Collins, Minister for Space.</p> <p>Return the signed briefing to the Ministry for the Environment (ema.pct@mfe.govt.nz and advice@mfe.govt.nz).</p>

Appendices and attachments
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix 1: Treaty partners and existing interests Appendix 2: Letters to Treaty Partners Appendix 3: Letters to persons with existing interests

Key contacts at Ministry for the Environment			
<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Cell phone</i>	<i>First contact</i>
Principal Author	Bonnie Hartfield		
Responsible Manager	Matthew Barbati-Ross	022 010 2147	✓
General Manager	Hayden Johnston	022 153 0221	

Minister's comments

Space vehicle jettison debris review - Next steps

Key messages

1. You have agreed to a review of the space vehicle jettison debris regulations under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects – Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 (EEZ regulations) [BRF-6058 refers].
2. On 25 August 2025, Cabinet delegated responsibility to you to approve consultation, make policy decisions, and issue Parliamentary Counsel Office (PCO) drafting instructions for the space vehicle jettison debris review [CAB-25-MIN-0285 refers] in consultation with the Minister for Space.
3. We will undertake two tranches of targeted engagement – the first tranche before public consultation starts, and the second tranche during the public consultation period. This targeted engagement has been planned to meet the requirements of section 32 of the EEZ Act.
4. The first tranche of targeted engagement will involve meeting with Treaty partners and persons with existing interests. These have been identified through a Treaty Impact Analysis and an assessment of existing interests in the launch debris area. This briefing seeks approval to begin tranche 1 of targeted engagement, including sending letters to Treaty partners and persons with existing interests.
5. We will return to you at key points in the review process to seek input and approval:
 - i in mid-September 2025, you will receive public consultation materials for your approval, based on the initial results of the Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) and targeted consultation. We will also seek approval from you to begin public consultation.
 - ii at the end of October 2025, you will receive advice on policy decisions and PCO drafting instructions, based on the results of the ERA and consultation.
 - iii in late November 2025, you will receive a draft Cabinet paper for Ministerial consultation alongside draft regulations. These will be lodged for approval by the Cabinet Legislation Committee (LEG) in December 2025.

Recommendations

We recommend that you:

- a. **consult** with the Minister for Space, Hon Judith Collins, in making decisions on this briefing

Yes | No

- b. **agree** to begin targeted consultation on space vehicle jettison debris regulations with Treaty partners and groups with existing interests

Yes | No

- c. **sign** the attached letters to Treaty partners and persons with existing interests, notifying them of the space vehicle jettison debris regulation review

Yes | No

Signatures



Matthew Barbati-Ross
Manager – Marine Policy
Environmental Management and Adaptation
28 August 2025

Hon Penny SIMMONDS
Minister for the Environment
Date

Space vehicle jettison debris review - Next steps

Purpose

1. This briefing outlines the next steps for the space vehicle jettison debris regulation review.
2. This briefing also seeks approval to begin targeted consultation and to send notification letters to Treaty partners and groups with existing interests.

Background

3. You have agreed to a narrow, targeted review of the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects – Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 (EEZ regulations). This will enable the space and advanced aviation sector to continue to grow within environmental limits [BRF-6058 refers].
4. On 25 August 2025, Cabinet delegated responsibility to you for approving consultation, making policy decisions, and issuing Parliamentary Counsel Office (PCO) drafting instructions for the space vehicle jettison debris review [CAB-25-MIN-0285 refers] in consultation with the Minister for Space.

Analysis and advice

Timeline for delivery

5. You will need to make decisions on public consultation, policy decisions, and authorisation of PCO drafting instructions. **Table 1** sets out the timing of advice.

Table 1: Ministerial deliverables for September – December 2025

Deliverable	Date	Decision required
Briefing - Discussion document and consultation	25 September	Agree to public consultation and tranche 2 of targeted consultation.
Briefing - Policy options and PCO drafting instructions	30 October	Agree preferred policy option and authorise PCO drafting instructions.
Cabinet paper – Draft regulations for approval	17 November	Agree to lodge paper for consideration at LEG in December after departmental and Ministerial consultation.

Targeted engagement

6. Section 32 of the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 (EEZ Act) requires you to notify the public, iwi authorities, regional councils and persons whose existing interests are likely to be affected of the proposed subject matter of the amended regulations. You must also establish a process that gives those groups adequate time and opportunity to comment on the subject matter of the proposed amendments.

7. We will undertake two tranches of targeted engagement – the first tranche before public consultation starts, and the second tranche during the public consultation period.

Treaty partners and groups with existing interests

8. Treaty partners and persons with existing interests that we consider appropriate to engage with in the first tranche are set out in **Appendix 1**. These include existing space vehicle operators and Treaty partners. Letters for your office to send can be found in **Appendices 2 and 3**.
9. The first tranche of targeted engagement will involve hui/meetings by Ministry for the Environment officials where they wish to engage. These will be initial discussions to outline the rationale for change and the initial results of the Ecological Risk Assessment. These discussions will inform policy options. If groups don't wish to engage at this stage, they still have the option to engage at the public consultation stage.
10. Targeted engagement will also provide more information on the potential effects of space vehicle debris. We will include this information in our policy options analysis.
11. We will undertake the second tranche of targeted engagement with other existing interests, such as potential space vehicle operators, fisheries operators, Customary Marine Title/Protected Customary Rights holders and applicants, and regional councils during the public consultation process. This will include notification of the review and a webinar explaining the different policy options.
12. We consider engagement with these groups during the public consultation phase to be appropriate for the following reasons:
 - i Potential space vehicle operators: Having an interest in undertaking space vehicle launches does not meet the definition of 'existing interest' under the EEZ Act.
 - ii Fisheries operators: There is limited fishing activity in the likely debris.
 - iii Customary Marine Title/Protected Customary Rights Holders and applicants: Customary marine title and protected customary rights only extend to the edge of the territorial sea (12 nautical miles). Space vehicle debris is unlikely to fall in or have effects on the territorial sea.
 - iv Regional councils: Regional councils are responsible for management of the territorial sea under the Resource Management Act 1991. Space vehicle debris is unlikely to fall in or have effects on the territorial sea.
13. You will receive more information on the second tranche of targeted engagement in September.

Te Tiriti analysis

14. Section 12 of the EEZ Act outlines how the Minister for the Environment can give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi for the purposes of the Act. The Minister must establish and use a process that gives iwi authorities adequate time and opportunity to comment on the subject matter of proposed regulations.

15. The targeted consultation process has been designed to ensure the Crown meets its Treaty settlement commitments.
16. The definition of an 'existing interest' in the EEZ Act includes holders of customary marine title or protected customary rights under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011. Customary marine title and protected customary rights only extend to the edge of the territorial sea.
17. We consider engaging with holders and applicants at the same time as other groups with existing interests, such as fisheries operators, to be appropriate based on the limited likelihood of space vehicle debris jettison in the EEZ impacting the territorial sea.
18. We are working with Land Information New Zealand and Te Tari Whakataua to identify Customary Marine Title/Protected Customary Rights holders and applicants adjacent to the launch debris area.

Other considerations

Risks and mitigations

19. Under section 32 of the EEZ Act, you are required to establish a process that gives the public, iwi authorities, and persons whose existing interests are likely to be affected adequate time and opportunity to comment on the subject matter of the proposed amendments. Undertaking targeted engagement ahead of and during public consultation can help mitigate risks relating to consultation (BRF-6508 refers).

Legal issues

20. No legal issues are associated with the proposals in this briefing.

Financial, regulatory and legislative implications

21. No financial, regulatory, or legislative implications are associated with the proposals in this briefing.

Appendix 1 - Treaty partners and existing interests

<i>Partner/stakeholder</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Rationale for targeted consultation</i>
Rocket Lab	Existing space vehicle operator	Existing launch operator in New Zealand.
University of Canterbury Aerospace	Existing space vehicle operator	Existing launch operator in New Zealand.
Rongomaiwahine Iwi Trust	Iwi	Mana whenua of ground-based space infrastructure in Mahia (used by Rocket Lab). Rohe moana in launch debris zone.
Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu	Iwi	Ngāi Tahu Settlement Act 1998 - Ngāi Tahu claim area extends into EEZ, and ground-based space infrastructure in Kaitorete Spit (used by University of Canterbury). Rohe moana in launch debris zone.
Hokotehi Moriori Trust	Imi	Moriori Claims Settlement Act 2021 – Rēkohu/Wharekauri fisheries area covers launch debris area, jointly managed with Ngāti Mutunga o Wharekauri Iwi Trust. Rohe moana in launch debris zone.
Ngāti Mutunga o Wharekauri Iwi Trust	Iwi	Moriori Claims Settlement Act 2021 – Rēkohu/Wharekauri fisheries area covers launch debris area, jointly managed with Hokotehi Moriori Trust. Rohe moana in launch debris zone.
Te Ohu Kaimoana	Trustee – Manages fisheries interests on behalf of Iwi	Treaty of Waitangi (Fisheries Claims) Settlement Act 1992 – Fisheries interest in the launch debris area.
Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou	Iwi	Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019 – Requirement to consult on matters which may affect Ngā Rohe Moana, which is adjacent to the launch debris area.

Appendix 2 - Letters to Treaty Partners

Appendix 3 - Letters to persons with existing interests

Hon Penny Simmonds

Minister for the Environment
Minister for Vocational Education
Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment



MO tracking code

Date

Terence Maru
Chief Executive Officer
Rongomaiwahine Iwi Trust
By email: terence@rongomaiwahine.iwi.nz

Tēnā koe Terence

The Government has decided to review the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects - Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 on the deposition of jettisoned debris from space vehicles in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). I would welcome the opportunity to hear the views of Rongomaiwahine early in the review process.

The review is being undertaken in response to the rapid growth of the space and advanced aviation industry in New Zealand. The review aims to enable economic growth within environmental limits. Any proposed changes to the regulations would be in place by the end of this year.

This is a narrow and targeted review of the effects of deposition of debris in the EEZ. We will not be looking at effects managed under other legislation, such as the Outer Space and High-Altitude Activities Act 2017 or the Resource Management Act 1991.

I will be undertaking targeted engagement with iwi, hapū, industry, and other persons with existing interests in the EEZ. Public consultation will also take place later this year.

I have asked officials from the Ministry for the Environment to follow up on this letter and arrange time to discuss the review with you. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Matthew Barbati-Ross, Manager, Marine Policy, at the Ministry for the Environment at matthew.barbati-ross@mfe.govt.nz.

I appreciate your time and contribution to the review process.

Ngā mihi

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment

CC: Hon Judith Collins – Minister for Space

Hon Penny Simmonds

Minister for the Environment
Minister for Vocational Education
Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment



MO tracking code

Date

Justin Tipa
Kaiwhakahaere
Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu
By email: info@ngaitahu.iwi.nz

Tēnā koe Justin

The Government has decided to review the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects - Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 on the deposition of jettisoned debris from space vehicles in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). I would welcome the opportunity to hear the views of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu early in the review process.

The review is being undertaken in response to the rapid growth of the space and advanced aviation industry in New Zealand. The review aims to enable economic growth within environmental limits. Any proposed changes to the regulations would be in place by the end of this year.

This is a narrow and targeted review of the effects of deposition of debris in the EEZ. We will not be looking at effects managed under other legislation, such as the Outer Space and High-Altitude Activities Act 2017 or the Resource Management Act 1991.

I will be undertaking targeted engagement with iwi, hapū, industry, and other persons with existing interests in the EEZ. Public consultation will also take place later this year.

I have asked officials from the Ministry for the Environment to follow up on this letter and arrange time to discuss the review with you. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Matthew Barbati-Ross, Manager, Marine Policy, at the Ministry for the Environment at matthew.barbati-ross@mfe.govt.nz.

I appreciate your time and contribution to the review process.

Ngā mihi

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment

CC: Hon Judith Collins – Minister for Space

Hon Penny Simmonds

Minister for the Environment
Minister for Vocational Education
Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment



MO tracking code

Date

Hayden Preece
Chairperson
Hokotehi Moriori Trust
By email: office@kopinga.co.nz

Tēnā koe Hayden

The Government has decided to review the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects - Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 on the deposition of jettisoned debris from space vehicles in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). I would welcome the opportunity to hear the views of Hokotehi Moriori Trust early in the review process.

The review is being undertaken in response to the rapid growth of the space and advanced aviation industry in New Zealand. The review aims to enable economic growth within environmental limits. Any proposed changes to the regulations would be in place by the end of this year.

This is a narrow and targeted review of the effects of deposition of debris in the EEZ. We will not be looking at effects managed under other legislation, such as the Outer Space and High-Altitude Activities Act 2017 or the Resource Management Act 1991.

I will be undertaking targeted engagement with iwi, hapū, industry, and other persons with existing interests in the EEZ. Public consultation will also take place later this year.

I have asked officials from the Ministry for the Environment to follow up on this letter and arrange time to discuss the review with you. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Matthew Barbati-Ross, Manager, Marine Policy, at the Ministry for the Environment at matthew.barbati-ross@mfe.govt.nz.

I appreciate your time and contribution to the review process.

Ngā mihi

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment

CC: Hon Judith Collins – Minister for Space

Hon Penny Simmonds

Minister for the Environment
Minister for Vocational Education
Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment



MO tracking code

Date

Monique Croon
Chairperson
Ngāti Mutunga o Wharekauri Trust
By email: iwitrust@nmow.iwi.nz

Tēnā koe Monique

The Government has decided to review the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects - Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 on the deposition of jettisoned debris from space vehicles in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). I would welcome the opportunity to hear the views of Ngāti Mutunga o Wharekauri Trust early in the review process.

The review is being undertaken in response to the rapid growth of the space and advanced aviation industry in New Zealand. The review aims to enable economic growth within environmental limits. Any proposed changes to the regulations would be in place by the end of this year.

This is a narrow and targeted review of the effects of deposition of debris in the EEZ. We will not be looking at effects managed under other legislation, such as the Outer Space and High-Altitude Activities Act 2017 or the Resource Management Act 1991.

I will be undertaking targeted engagement with iwi, hapū, industry, and other persons with existing interests in the EEZ. Public consultation will also take place later this year.

I have asked officials from the Ministry for the Environment to follow up on this letter and arrange time to discuss the review with you. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Matthew Barbati-Ross, Manager, Marine Policy, at the Ministry for the Environment at matthew.barbati-ross@mfe.govt.nz.

I appreciate your time and contribution to the review process.

Ngā mihi

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment

CC: Hon Judith Collins – Minister for Space

Hon Penny Simmonds

Minister for the Environment
Minister for Vocational Education
Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment



MO tracking code

Date

Pahia Turia
Tumu Whakarae
Te Ohu Kaimoana
By email: ika@teohu.maori.nz

Tēnā koe Pahia

The Government has decided to review the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects - Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 on the deposition of jettisoned debris from space vehicles in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). I would welcome the opportunity to hear the views of Te Ohu Kaimoana early in the review process.

The review is being undertaken in response to the rapid growth of the space and advanced aviation industry in New Zealand. The review aims to enable economic growth within environmental limits. Any proposed changes to the regulations would be in place by the end of this year.

This is a narrow and targeted review of the effects of deposition of debris in the EEZ. We will not be looking at effects managed under other legislation, such as the Outer Space and High-Altitude Activities Act 2017 or the Resource Management Act 1991.

I will be undertaking targeted engagement with iwi, hapū, industry, and other persons with existing interests in the EEZ. Public consultation will also take place later this year.

I have asked officials from the Ministry for the Environment to follow up on this letter and arrange time to discuss the review with you. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Matthew Barbati-Ross, Manager, Marine Policy, at the Ministry for the Environment at matthew.barbati-ross@mfe.govt.nz.

I appreciate your time and contribution to the review process.

Ngā mihi

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment

CC: Hon Judith Collins – Minister for Space

Hon Penny Simmonds

Minister for the Environment
Minister for Vocational Education
Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment



MO tracking code

Date

Dean Moana
Chairperson
Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Coordinating Group
By email: dean@nzfoodgroup.com

Tēnā koe Dean

The Government has decided to review the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects - Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 on the deposition of jettisoned debris from space vehicles in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). I would welcome the opportunity to hear the views of Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou early in the review process.

The review is being undertaken in response to the rapid growth of the space and advanced aviation industry in New Zealand. The review aims to enable economic growth within environmental limits. Any proposed changes to the regulations would be in place by the end of this year.

This is a narrow and targeted review of the effects of deposition of debris in the EEZ. We will not be looking at effects managed under other legislation, such as the Outer Space and High-Altitude Activities Act 2017 or the Resource Management Act 1991.

I will be undertaking targeted engagement with iwi, hapū, industry, and other persons with existing interests in the EEZ. Public consultation will also take place later this year.

I have asked officials from the Ministry for the Environment to follow up on this letter and arrange time to discuss the review with you. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Matthew Barbati-Ross, Manager, Marine Policy, at the Ministry for the Environment at matthew.barbati-ross@mfe.govt.nz.

I appreciate your time and contribution to the review process.

Ngā mihi

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment

CC: Hon Judith Collins – Minister for Space

CC: Agnes Walker - takutai@tronp.org.nz

Hon Penny Simmonds

Minister for the Environment
Minister for Vocational Education
Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment



MO tracking code

Date

Sir Peter Beck
President
Rocket Lab
By email: e.comrie-thomson@rocketlab.co.nz

Dear Sir Peter

The Government has decided to review the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects - Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 on the deposition of jettisoned debris from space vehicles in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). I would welcome the opportunity to hear the views of Rocket Lab early in the review process.

The review is being undertaken in response to the rapid growth of the space and advanced aviation industry in New Zealand. The review aims to enable economic growth within environmental limits. Any proposed changes to the regulations would be in place by the end of this year.

This is a narrow and targeted review of the effects of deposition of debris in the EEZ. We will not be looking at effects managed under other legislation, such as the Outer Space and High-Altitude Activities Act 2017 or the Resource Management Act 1991.

I will be undertaking targeted engagement with iwi, hapū, industry, and other persons with existing interests in the EEZ. Public consultation will also take place later this year.

I have asked officials from the Ministry for the Environment to follow up on this letter and arrange time to discuss the review with you or your team. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Matthew Barbati-Ross, Manager, Marine Policy, at the Ministry for the Environment at matthew.barbati-ross@mfe.govt.nz.

I appreciate your time and contribution to the review process.

Yours sincerely

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment

Cc: Hon Judith Collins – Minister for Space

Hon Penny Simmonds

Minister for the Environment
Minister for Vocational Education
Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment



MO tracking code

Date

Jorja Holden
President
UC Aerospace
By email: info@ucaerospace.com

Dear Jorja

The Government has decided to review the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects - Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 on the deposition of jettisoned debris from space vehicles in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). I would welcome the opportunity to hear the views of UC Aerospace early in the review process.

The review is being undertaken in response to the rapid growth of the space and advanced aviation industry in New Zealand. The review aims to enable economic growth within environmental limits. Any proposed changes to the regulations would be in place by the end of this year.

This is a narrow and targeted review of the effects of deposition of debris in the EEZ. We will not be looking at effects managed under other legislation, such as the Outer Space and High-Altitude Activities Act 2017 or the Resource Management Act 1991.

I will be undertaking targeted engagement with iwi, hapū, industry, and other persons with existing interests in the EEZ. Public consultation will also take place later this year.

I have asked officials from the Ministry for the Environment to follow up on this letter and arrange time to discuss the review with you. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact Matthew Barbati-Ross, Manager, Marine Policy, at the Ministry for the Environment at matthew.barbati-ross@mfe.govt.nz.

I appreciate your time and contribution to the review process.

Yours sincerely

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment

Cc: Hon Judith Collins – Minister for Space



Aide memoire: Space vehicle jettison debris - results of the Ecological Risk Assessment

Date submitted: 10 September 2025

Tracking number: BRF-6800

Security level: In-Confidence

Actions sought from ministers	
<i>Name and position</i>	<i>Action sought</i>
To Hon Penny SIMMONDS Minister for the Environment	For noting only

Appendices and attachments
Nil

Key contacts at Ministry for the Environment			
<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Cell phone</i>	<i>First contact</i>
Principal Author	Bonnie Hartfield		
Responsible Manager	Matthew Barbati-Ross	022 010 2147	✓
General Manager	Nik Andic		

Space vehicle jettison debris - results of the Ecological Risk Assessment

Purpose

1. This aide memoire provides you with results of the Earth Sciences NZ ecological risk assessment (ERA) into space vehicle jettison debris deposition in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and initial policy options for consultation.
2. Based on the results of the risk assessment, we have developed initial policy options. We will be seeking your agreement to consult on these options via a briefing later this month.

Background

3. We commissioned Earth Sciences NZ (previously NIWA) to provide an ERA as part of the review into the launch deposition limit for space vehicle jettison debris under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects – Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 (the EEZ regulations) [BRF-6058 refers].
4. We have received a draft version of the ERA. Officials will review the assessment and provide feedback to Earth Sciences NZ before a final copy is provided.

The risk to the marine environment from space vehicle jettison debris is low

5. The ERA considered the effects of space vehicle jettison debris deposition for space vehicles for up to 10,000 launches. These effects are based on Rocket Lab's Electron space vehicle (which is the only space vehicle regularly launching from New Zealand).
6. Rocket Lab provided Earth Sciences New Zealand with updated information on how jettisoned material breaks apart and is deposited on the seabed. Based on this, three effects of space vehicle jettison debris deposition in the EEZ were considered:
 - i. Direct strike causing mortality,
 - ii. Noise disturbance, and
 - iii. Smothering of organisms on the seabed.
7. The ERA shows that the risk to the marine environment for up to 1,000 launches is low. Effects, particularly noise disturbance, become moderate at up to 10,000 launches.
 - i. The assessment shows the risk to the marine environment is moderate at 1,000 launches if jettison debris is deposited on seamounts (underwater mountains). Seamounts which are closed to trawling are already excluded from the authorised launch deposit area specified in the EEZ regulations.

We are developing policy options for consultation

8. Based on the results of the risk assessment, we have developed initial policy options to consult on:

- i. increasing the launch limit to 1,000 launches,
 - ii. removing the launch limit entirely, and
 - iii. retaining the status quo.
9. The discussion document has been drafted to meet the impact analysis requirements [Cabinet Circular CO (24) 7 refers]. The initial options have been developed to lead to effective consultation and enable the development of future impact analysis.

Final policy options will be developed based on the results of the ERA, targeted engagement and public consultation

10. Section 33 of the EEZ Act requires you to consider effects on existing interests alongside environmental effects when developing regulations.
11. Targeted engagement and public consultation has been planned to provide more information on existing interests.
12. After the consultation period ends, we will return to you with final policy options for your consideration. These will be based on the results of the ERA, targeted engagement and public consultation.

Next steps

13. You will receive a briefing later this month requesting approval for public consultation. This will include a draft discussion document with the initial policy options.
14. You may wish to forward this briefing to the Minister for Space, Hon Judith Collins.

Signatures



Nik Andic
Acting General Manager – Natural Environment Policy
Environmental Management and Adaptation
10 September 2025

Hon Penny SIMMONDS
Minister for the Environment
Date

Space vehicle jettison debris review - Approval to consult

Date submitted: 26 September 2025

Tracking number: BRF-6773

Security level: In-Confidence

MfE priority: Urgent

Actions sought from Ministers		
Name and position	Action sought	Response by
To Hon Penny SIMMONDS Minister for the Environment	Approve public consultation and publication of a discussion document	1 October 2025

Actions for Minister's office staff

Forward this briefing to:

Minister for Space, Hon Judith Collins

Return the signed briefing to the Ministry for the Environment (ema.pct@mfe.govt.nz) and advice@mfe.govt.nz).

Appendices and attachments

Appendix 1: Draft discussion document: *Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone*

Appendix 2: Other existing interests

Appendix 3: Cabinet paper and related minute for proactive release

Key contacts at Ministry for the Environment

Position	Name	Cell phone	First contact
Principal Author	Bonnie Hartfield		
Responsible Manager	Matthew Barbati-Ross	022 010 2147	
General Manager	Jo Gascoigne	027 531 7202	✓

Minister's comments

Space vehicle jettison debris review - Approval to consult

Key messages

1. You have agreed to a review of the space vehicle jettison debris regulations under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects – Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 (EEZ regulations) [BRF-6058 refers].
2. The next step in the EEZ regulations review process is public consultation and the second tranche of targeted engagement.
3. Section 32 of the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 (the Act) states that you must establish a process that you consider gives the public, iwi authorities, and persons whose existing interests are likely to be affected adequate time and opportunity to comment on the subject matter of the proposed regulations.
4. We recommend opening public consultation on 6 October 2025 and inviting feedback until 19 October 2025. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
5. Officials have drafted a discussion document to release alongside public consultation. This can be found in **Appendix 1**. The discussion document includes initial options to amend the launch limit [BRF-6800 refers].
6. During the public consultation period, we will also undertake the second tranche of targeted engagement. Officials will offer to meet with persons with other existing interests, such as potential space vehicle operators, fisheries operators, Customary Marine Title/Protected Customary Rights holders and applicants, and regional councils. A list of these groups can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Recommendations

We recommend that you:

- a. **consult** with the Minister for Space, Hon Judith Collins, in making decisions on this briefing.
- Yes | No
- b. **agree to** progress a second tranche of engagement on the review with persons with other existing interests, such as potential space vehicle operators, fisheries operators, Customary Marine Title/Protected Customary Rights holders and applicants, and regional councils.

Yes | No

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

- c. **agree** to consult on the proposed amendments to the regulations for a period of two weeks.

Yes | No

- d. **approve** publishing the *Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone* discussion document for public consultation.

Yes | No

- e. **agree** this briefing will be released proactively on the Ministry for the Environment's website at the time of public notification of the *Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone* proposals and will be subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Yes | No

- f. **agree** the Cabinet paper and related Cabinet minutes in **Appendix 3** will be proactively released at the time of public notification of *Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone* proposals and will be subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Yes | No

Signatures



Jo Gascoigne
General Manager – Resource Management System
Environmental Management and Adaptation
26 September 2025

Hon Penny SIMMONDS
Minister for the Environment
Date

Space vehicle jettison debris review - Approval to consult

Purpose

1. This briefing requests approval to undertake public consultation on potential amendments to the space vehicle jettison debris regulations under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects – Permitted Activities) Regulations 2013 (EEZ regulations). It also provides a draft discussion document for feedback and approval.

Background

2. You have agreed to a narrow, targeted review of the EEZ regulations to enable the space industry to grow within environmental limits [BRF-6058 refers].
3. On 25 August 2025, Cabinet delegated responsibility to you for approving consultation, making policy decisions and issuing the Parliamentary Council Office (PCO) drafting instructions for the space vehicle jettison debris review, in consultation with the Minister for Space [CAB-25-MIN-0285].
4. Officials have begun targeted engagement with Treaty partners and persons with existing interests [BRF-6717 refers]. We have also received the ecological risk assessment from Earth Sciences NZ and used this to develop initial policy options for consultation [BRF-6800 refers].

Analysis and advice

Public consultation

5. The next step in the EEZ regulations review process is public consultation and the second tranche of targeted engagement. Under section 32 of the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 (the Act), you must establish a process that you consider gives the public, iwi authorities, and persons whose existing interests are likely to be affected adequate time and opportunity to comment on the subject matter of the proposed regulations.
6. Officials have drafted a discussion document to release as part of public consultation. This can be found in **Appendix 1**.
7. The discussion document outlines the effects of space vehicle jettison debris deposition and options to:
 - i Increase the launch limit to 1,000
 - ii Remove the launch limit
 - iii Keep the launch limit at 100 (Status quo).

8. These options have been developed based on the results of the ecological risk assessment and progress with tranche one of targeted engagement [BRF-6800 refers].
9. We recommend opening public consultation and releasing the discussion document on 6 October 2025. We recommend a consultation period of two weeks, closing on 19 October 2025.
10. Public consultation will be announced through the Ministry for the Environment website. We will also directly notify persons with other existing interests we are engaging with as part of our targeted consultation. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
11. We are able to support your office with media materials. We will work alongside officials from the NZ Space Agency to co-ordinate any media materials or responses to queries.

Targeted engagement

12. We have begun the first tranche of targeted engagement. Officials have met with representatives from Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou, Rocket Lab, Te Ohu Kaimoana and University of Canterbury (UC) Aerospace:
 - i. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
 - ii. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
13. We have informed Hokotehi Māori Trust, Ngāti Mutunga o Wharekauri Iwi Trust, Rongomaiwahine Iwi Trust or Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu of the review and offered to meet with them, but have not yet had any response.
14. During the public consultation period, we will also undertake the second tranche of targeted engagement [BRF-6717 refers].
15. Officials will offer to meet with persons with other existing interests during the public consultation process. We will also notify these persons of the opportunity to submit during the public consultation period. A list of these persons can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Te Tiriti analysis

16. Section 12 of the Act outlines how the Minister for the Environment can give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi for the purposes of the Act. The Minister must establish and use a process that gives iwi authorities adequate time and opportunity to comment on the subject matter of proposed regulations.

17. The public consultation and targeted engagement process has been designed to ensure the Crown meets its Treaty settlement commitments. As part of the public consultation process, we will notify iwi authorities and provide them with information on how to make a submission.
18. We have begun the first tranche of targeted engagement with Treaty partners who have interests in the area of the EEZ where debris is deposited [BRF-6717 refers]. The second tranche of targeted engagement will include Customary Marine Title/Protected Customary Rights holders and applicants, iwi authorities who have previously commented on space vehicle jettison debris regulations, and iwi with land-based interests in the space and advanced aviation sector.
19. Public consultation and targeted engagement will also provide more information on the potential effects of space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone on Māori rights and interests. We will include this information in our subsequent analysis of policy options.

Other considerations

Consultation and engagement

20. We have consulted with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment during the development of the discussion document.

Risks and mitigations

21. [REDACTED]
22. Significant changes to the discussion document or public consultation timelines would impact the ability to provide you with policy options and drafting instructions by the end of October.

Legal issues

23. [REDACTED]
24. [REDACTED]

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

[REDACTED]

Financial, regulatory and legislative implications

25. This paper is part of a process that will result in changes to existing secondary legislation.

Next steps

26. We will incorporate any feedback into the draft discussion document and provide your office with a final version.
27. Once public consultation has closed, officials will analyse submissions and provide you with policy options alongside a regulatory impact statement (RIS) and Treaty impact analysis (TIA) for consideration by the end of October 2025.

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Appendix 1 – Draft discussion document: *Reviewing regulations for space vehicle jettison debris in the Exclusive Economic Zone*

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Appendix 2 – Other existing interests

[IN-CONFIDENCE]

Appendix 3 – Cabinet paper and related minute for proactive release

Appendix 2 – Other existing interests

<i>Persons with other existing interests we will undertake engagement with</i>		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Rationale for targeted consultation</i>
Chatham Rock Phosphate	Existing interest – mining permit	Hold a mining permit in the authorised debris deposition area.
Customary Marine Title applicants and holders	Existing interest – customary	Customary Marine Title under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 are recognised as an existing interest under the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Act 2012 (EEZ Act).
Protected Customary Right applicants and holders	Existing interest – customary	Protected customary rights under the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011 are recognised as an existing interest under the EEZ Act.
Tawapata South Incorporation	Existing interest – space and advanced aviation sector	Māori land trust that owns the Mahia location where Rocket Lab operates.
Tāwhaki National Aerospace Centre	Existing interest – space and advanced aviation sector	Manage ground-based launch facility at Kaitorete Spit, Canterbury.

<i>Persons with other existing interests we will notify of public consultation</i>		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Rationale for notification</i>
Civil Aviation Authority	Existing interest – regulator of controlled airspace	Manage airspace warnings when debris is jettisoned during launch.
Energy Resources Aotearoa	eNGO – Oil and Gas	Submitted on space vehicle jettison debris regulations in 2017.
Fiordland Marine Guardians	Statutory advisory group	Fiordland Marine Area is adjacent to the authorised launch deposit area.

<i>Persons with other existing interests we will notify of public consultation</i>		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Rationale for notification</i>
Iwi Authorities	Iwi	Required to notify iwi authorities under s32 of the EEZ Act.
Maritime New Zealand	Existing interest – regulator of maritime warning system	Manage the maritime warning system when debris is jettisoned during launch.
Moana New Zealand	Existing interest – fisheries	Holds fishing quota in debris deposition area.
Ngāti Maniapoto	Iwi – Existing interests in other areas of the EEZ	Interests in the Exclusive Economic Zone on the West Coast are acknowledged in the Maniapoto Claims Settlement Act 2022.
Regional Councils	Local authority	Requirement to notify under section 32 of EEZ Act.
Seafood NZ Deepwater Council	eNGO - Fisheries	Represents interests of deepwater fisheries quota holders.
Sanford	Existing interest - fisheries	Holds fishing quota in debris deposition area.
Sealord	Existing interest - fisheries	Holds fishing quota in debris deposition area.
Talley's	Existing interest - fisheries	Submitted on space vehicle jettison debris regulations in 2017. Holds fishing quota in debris deposition area.
Te Manawa o Ngāti Kuri	Previously submitted on space vehicle regulations	Submitted on space vehicle jettison debris regulations in 2017.
Te Rūnanga o Ngati Ruanui Trust	Previously submitted on space vehicle regulations	Submitted on space vehicle jettison debris regulations in 2017.
Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira	Previously submitted on space vehicle regulations	Submitted on space vehicle jettison debris regulations in 2017.