

Hon Scott Simpson
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON
scott.simpson@parliament.govt.nz

Dear Hon Scott Simpson

I refer to your Official Information Act (OIA) request dated 12 September 2018, seeking:

'All reports, correspondence, emails, texts, briefings and aide memoires you have received or sent, or your staff have received or sent concerning Glyphosate since 1 February 2018.'

On 20 September 2018, we emailed your office to advise that your request, as originally worded, was broad, and would incorporate administrative and non-substantial correspondence, including public media article collation, daily media scanning, shared media web links, and document or web links that have minor references to Glyphosate. This would be a significant volume of material, most of which would be publically available.

We suggested that the request be refined to:

'All substantial reports, correspondence, emails, texts, briefings and aide memoires providing advice and/or analysis on glyphosate that you have received or sent, or your staff have received or sent concerning Glyphosate since 1 February 2018.'

We have not received a response on this proposal to refine the request. We have decided to proceed on the basis of the refinement to avoid refusing the request under section 18(f) of the OIA, relating to substantial collation.

Hazardous substances and new organisms are regulated in New Zealand under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO Act). The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) is New Zealand's independent regulatory authority, which assess and makes decisions on applications to introduce hazardous substances or new organisms. The Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) does not review the EPA's approvals or assessments of particular hazardous substances or new organisms.

The attached table lists the documents that fall within the scope of your request and outlines the OIA withholding provisions applied to the released documents.



You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Glenn Wigley
Director, Natural and Built System

Released under the provision of
the Official Information Act 1982

List of documents

No.	Date	Content	Decision	OIA Section/s applied (if withholding information)	Reason for withholding
1	7 February 2018	Re: Hello and request for further information. Email exchange between MfE and Cawthron on upcoming emerging contaminants research.	Release in part	S9(2)(a)	To protect the privacy of natural persons
2	28 February 2018	Re: glyphosate, email conversation between MfE and Waikato regional council staff on research being undertaken by Waikato Regional Council	Release in full		
3	23 March 2018	RE: Latest Glyphosate story, email between MfE and EPA, on whether a response was occurring due to a Radio New Zealand article	Release in part	S9(2)(a)	To protect the privacy of natural persons
4	23 March 2018	FW: glyphosate	Release in full		
5	31 May 2018	Re: Paragraph updates, Emails between MfE and EPA, emails on fact Sheets	Release in part	S9(2)(a)	To protect the privacy of natural persons
6	13 August 2018	Re: Glyphosate, internal emails discussing media request for information on glyphosate	Release in part	S9(2)(a)	To protect the privacy of natural persons

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From: S9(2)(a)
To: [Hamish Campbell](#)
Subject: RE: Hello and request for further information
Date: Wednesday, 7 February 2018 10:11:33 AM
Attachments: [Matthew Taylor.vcf](#)

Hi Hamish,

Thanks for taking the time last week, it was great to touch base and get to know your role. It's important to have some transparency with research and to keep people informed. Please do communicate with S9(2)(a) re the role on the Advisory Panel of the Emerging Contaminants project. It would be great if you could play a role as you seem to have a wider overview of contaminants that would be beneficial to the group. It should be easier once we have sorted the ToR for the panel.

I've attached the details of Matthew who is the lead of the initiative on glyphosate. It would be great if you could contact him to get an overview.

In any case, I'll keep you informed about those projects including the microplastics
Louis

S9(2)(a)

Environmental Toxicologist

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Senior Lecturer | School of Biological Sciences | University of Auckland | PO Box 92019, Auckland 1142 |

Out of Scope - Pages 1-6

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From: [Matthew Taylor](#)
To: [Hamish Campbell](#)
Cc: [S9\(2\)\(a\)](#) [@cawthron.org.nz](#)
Subject: RE: glyphosate
Date: Wednesday, 28 February 2018 4:49:30 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Largely driven by public/Councillor interest. However, we really have no useful data to say if there is a concern or not
Cheers
matthew

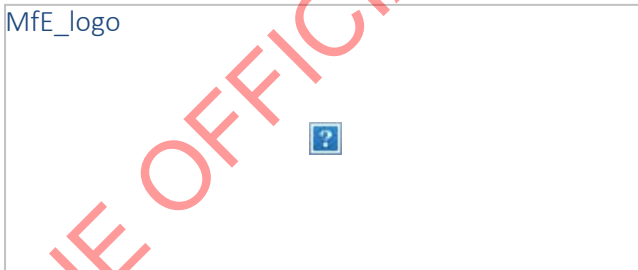
From: Hamish Campbell [mailto:Hamish.Campbell@mfe.govt.nz]
Sent: Wednesday, 28 February 2018 4:48 p.m.
To: Matthew Taylor <Matthew.Taylor@waikatoregion.govt.nz>
Cc: [S9\(2\)\(a\)](#) [@cawthron.org.nz](#) [S9\(2\)\(a\)](#) [@cawthron.org.nz](#)
Subject: RE: glyphosate

Thanks Matthew

That's quite interesting. Is there any particular concern that is being examined? Or just trying to determine baselines of glyphosate in the environment.

Hamish Campbell, Senior Policy Analyst Environmental Risk and Innovation
Ministry for the Environment – Manatu Mo Te Taiao
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MfE_logo



From: Matthew Taylor [mailto:Matthew.Taylor@waikatoregion.govt.nz]
Sent: Wednesday, 28 February 2018 4:31 p.m.
To: Hamish Campbell
Cc: [S9\(2\)\(a\)](#) [@cawthron.org.nz](#)
Subject: RE: glyphosate

Hi Hamish

We detected glyphosate and its breakdown product in our soil quality monitoring sites when we used these for a "one-off" assessment. We first tested the sites with what we thought had the longest and greatest use. These all came back as detects and some were quite high. However, there are no environmental guidelines against to compare results. We will send off more soil samples this year and look at a wider range of land uses to get some idea of baseline values. We are also going to sample after glyphosate application to control weeds in a recreational stream. We may or may not detect it.

Another avenue is an envirolink advice grant application with HBRC to correlate all RC data on glyphosate (assuming there is some). I have helped get this grant together and need ½ day to finish it (probably next month). I see no reason why MfE can't be a party to this information.

So, not much data available but we are working on it

Kind Regards
Matthew

From: Hamish Campbell [<mailto:Hamish.Campbell@mfe.govt.nz>]
Sent: Wednesday, 28 February 2018 4:19 p.m.
To: Matthew Taylor <Matthew.Taylor@waikatoregion.govt.nz>
Subject: glyphosate

Hi Matthew

I am a senior analyst at MfE I work mainly with policy around hazardous substances and new organisms under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO).

I had a meeting the other day with S9(2)(a) to learn more about the work around emerging contaminants by Cawthron. The Ministry is keen to keep up to date on emerging issues/technology and their environmental impact . This helps us to ensure that the HSNO Act is fit for purpose and environmental risks are being managed.

He mentioned that there is some work being undertaken on glyphosate and we are quite keen to learn more on this. If it's able to be shared.

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From: [Michael Pearson](#)
To: [Brian Hallinan](#); [Mark Patchett](#)
Cc: [Diane Robinson](#); [Fiona Thomson-Carter](#)
Subject: RE: Latest Glyphosate story
Date: Friday, 23 March 2018 11:07:15 AM
Attachments: [image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.jpg](#)
[image008.jpg](#)
[image009.jpg](#)

Hi Brian

We received a draft of the article for the Medical Journal from TVNZ's Breakfast programme, and sent them the attached statement below on Wednesday. Radio NZ's Eric Frykberg also contacted us about the issue, and we sent him the same statement yesterday.

Michael

We believe this commentary contains very little new information, and relies significantly on media references and opinion.

While we acknowledge public concern around glyphosate, as a scientific organisation our decisions must be based on evidence and data.

For this reason, glyphosate is on our reassessment watch list, (publicly available on our website) which means we constantly monitor its status and relevant international developments.

EPA's decision-making processes are more extensive and complex than implied in the commentary. The Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act requires us to follow a set process when considering chemicals for reassessment, which is costly. The process ensures we spend taxpayers' money wisely, and that we address those chemicals which present the biggest threat to human health and our environment, in priority order.

For example, paraquat (a weed killer) is currently undergoing reassessment, to be followed by chlorpyrifos (a pesticide), because both chemicals are determined to be considerably more harmful to people and our environment than glyphosate at the present time. This reflects the EPA's commitment to protecting human health and environmental safety.

Michael Pearson

Senior Communications Advisor

S9(2)(a)



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If you receive this message in error, please notify the sender and delete the message and any attachment(s).

From: Brian Hallinan [mailto:Brian.Hallinan@mfe.govt.nz]
Sent: Friday, 23 March 2018 10:49 AM
To: Mark Patchett <Mark.Patchett@epa.govt.nz>; Michael Pearson <Michael.Pearson@epa.govt.nz>
Subject: Latest Glyphosate story

Hi Mark and Michael

Is EPA planning a response to today's story:

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/top/353175/scientists-call-on-epa-to-ban-herbicide>

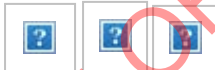
If so, can you please send us a copy? The latest story appears to just be a re-statement of the debates from last year, i.e. it doesn't look like new arguments, so I'm assuming it will get the same response.

Thanks

Brian

Brian Hallinan – Manager, Environmental Risk and Innovation
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Environment House, 23 Kate Sheppard Place, PO Box 10362, Wellington 6143

<http://intranet.mfe.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Lockup-8pt.png>



From: [Hamish Campbell](#)
To: [Brian Hallinan](#)
Subject: FW: glyphosate
Date: Friday, 23 March 2018 9:44:00 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

This article will provide useful context if we need to have a short paragraph in case of questions.

Looking for the other work that was done, but its likely filed somewhere after the OIAs we had., will keep hunting.

Hamish Campbell, Senior Policy Analyst Environmental Risk and Innovation

Ministry for the Environment – Manatu Mo Te Taiao

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From: Mariska Wouters
Sent: Friday, 4 August 2017 8:04 p.m.
To: Hamish Campbell
Subject: FW: glyphosate

fyi

From: Dianna Caird
Sent: Friday, 4 August 2017 12:07 p.m.
To: Mariska Wouters
Subject: RE: glyphosate

I have found this piece so far:

From Status report #2355 – 27 July 2015

There is likely to be further interest in issues around glyphosate as we understand the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) monograph will be published later this month. IARC identifies chemical hazards but does not assess risk of chemicals. Their determination only relates to whether glyphosate might cause cancer but does not make any comment on whether glyphosate is likely to cause cancer in humans when used properly. Another WHO assessment group, the Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residues (who assess risk) has determined that glyphosate does not pose a cancer risk to humans. The WHO is conducting an Expert Consultation on glyphosate to resolve their opinion on the safety of this herbicide. It is expected to report later this year.

I remember the info you mean – and I can't find it in Te Puna.

There are some useful links on here too – it's an email from Sarah H <http://tepuna/otcs/cs.dll?>

[func=ll&objId=7172728&objAction=viewheader](#)

This wired article is brilliant and has a very nice example or two of how the WHO and the IARC are asking different questions.

<https://www.wired.com/2016/05/monsantos-roundup-herbicide-cause-cancer-not-controversy-explained/>

(This is terrible – I've had more fun looking for this over the last half hour than I have all week – although it may be to do with my being stuck writing a high value high risk contract right now!)

From: Mariska Wouters
Sent: Friday, 4 August 2017 9:59 a.m.
To: Dianna Caird
Subject: glyphosate

Hiya, did you write up a little explanation of how the IARC considered glyphosate? I think I remember you had a nice little explanation of the hazards approach (like, don't drink coffee).

M☺

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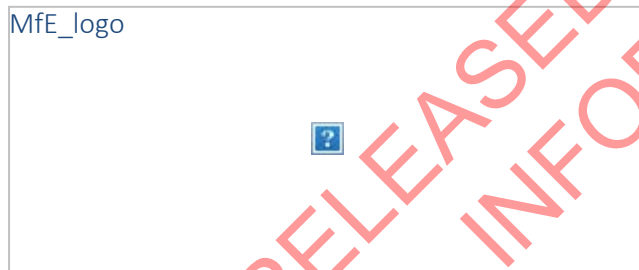
From: [Hamish Campbell](#)
To: "Cherie Engelbrecht"
Cc: [Brian Hallinan](#)
Subject: RE: Paragraph UPDATES - review of paragraphs - re Mfe appearance before the s/committee
Date: Thursday, 31 May 2018 3:29:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

I think it would be good to add a paragraph around what you mentioned. As it should be made clear that reassessments are not just reliant on the EPA starting them.

Based on what you wrote in last email.

Reassessments. It should be noted that reassessments of substances such as glyphosate, neonicotinoids or any other substance of concern is an open application process. This means that a reassessment can be applied for (and paid for) by any external party if application and supporting evidence to meet the Grounds for reassessment criteria is provided and met, followed by supporting evidence and application for any subsequent reassessment is made

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From: Hamish Campbell
Sent: Thursday, 31 May 2018 3:08 PM
To: 'Cherie Engelbrecht' <Cherie.Engelbrecht@epa.govt.nz>
Cc: Brian Hallinan <Brian.Hallinan@mfe.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Paragraph UPDATES - review of paragraphs - re Mfe appearance before the s/committee

Thanks for this.

Mentioning the reassessment application process being open could be useful context though.

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MfE_logo



From: Cherie Engelbrecht <Cherie.Engelbrecht@epa.govt.nz>

Sent: Thursday, 31 May 2018 3:05 PM

To: Hamish Campbell <Hamish.Campbell@mfe.govt.nz>

Cc: Brian Hallinan <Brian.Hallinan@mfe.govt.nz>

Subject: FW: Paragraph UPDATES - review of paragraphs - re Mfe appearance before the s/committee

Hi there

Please see bits in red below

Many thanks

cherie

Hi Cherie

As Brian mentioned here are two paragraphs on neonics and glyphosate. That need updating. Basically we just have stated that EPA continues to monitor etc etc

- **Neonicotinoids** are substances used as pesticides and have frequently been in the media due to concerns that they are impacting bee and pollinator populations. To date, scientific evidence on the issue has not provided any clear proof that this is occurring. The Ministry and the EPA have both received questions on this issue from members of the public and opposition parties. The EPA is not currently undertaking any reassessments of neonicotinoids but continues to monitor international developments and research. If the EPA considers a formal review is needed after reviewing overseas reports and research, a reassessment may be initiated. To date scientific evidence on the issue has not provided any clear proof that neonicotinoids pose a threat to pollinator populations.
- **Glyphosate** is frequently in the media due to concerns that it may impact bee populations and have health effects on people. Recently findings by the semi-independent World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) have caused concern that the substance is carcinogenic. However, findings by a Joint Panel of the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization, in addition to other international environmental regulators (including New Zealand's EPA), have not come to the same conclusion. Subsequently, because of these opposing findings, there has been a large degree of media, public, and opposition interest in the substance. Glyphosate is on the Chief Executive Initiated Reassessment (CEIR) Programme list, which means that the EPA are actively monitoring its status and international developments. If the EPA consider

a formal review is needed based on overseas reports and research, a reassessment may be initiated. However, the EPA has stated that based on current evidence, glyphosate does not require classification under HSNO as a carcinogen or mutagen.

Not sure if mention of the fact that reassessments is also an open application process – so can be applied for (and paid for) by any external party if application and supporting evidence to meet the Grounds for reassessment criteria is provided and met, followed by supporting evidence and application for any subsequent reassessment is made. This may not be appropriate to include though.

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From: [Hamish Campbell](#)
To: [Brian Hallinan](#); [Laurie Edwards](#)
Subject: RE: Glyphosate
Date: Monday, 13 August 2018 9:46:00 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.jpg](#)

Just need to change Agency to "Authority "

Hamish Campbell, Senior Policy Analyst Environmental Risk and Innovation
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 Mobile: **S9(2)(a)** Email: hamish.campbell@mfe.govt.nz Website: www.mfe.govt.nz
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From: Brian Hallinan
Sent: Monday, 13 August 2018 9:44 AM
To: Laurie Edwards <Laurie.Edwards@mfe.govt.nz>
Cc: Hamish Campbell <Hamish.Campbell@mfe.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Glyphosate

Hi Laurie

These questions are best answered by the EPA, which is the regulator that has good information on the issues (and will be the one making any future decisions about glyphosate).

Off the top of my head, the answers are:

Amount used annually in NZ? – [Unsure but EPA would know.](#)

2. The crops on which it is used? – [used on all \(or almost all\) types of crops. Again, EPA may have more specifics.](#)

3. How many years it has been used in NZ? – [unknown but EPA will know when it is first approved](#)

4. What the alternatives are (other than going organic)? What are the names of some of the products that could be used in its place? – [there are many alternatives, but the issue is the comparative effectiveness.](#)

5. Can you give me a general statement about the court case in the US. [MFE does not have detailed information on the US court case. The HSNO Act provides for the EPA to make scientific assessments of hazardous substances. The EPA has commented that "There is no change to the science behind our current position, which is products containing glyphosate remain safe to use when you follow the instructions on the products label."](#)

We could add a reference to Sage's reported comments, which are quite appropriate:

appeal.

"The Environmental Protection Agency has the technical expertise to make these decisions so it's their responsibility rather than a political issue for Parliament," Sage said.

From: Laurie Edwards
Sent: Monday, 13 August 2018 8:47 AM
To: Brian Hallinan <Brian.Hallinan@mfe.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: Glyphosate
Importance: High

Hey – this will be in response to Minister Sage's weekend announcement. Are there questions we can answer?

Laurie

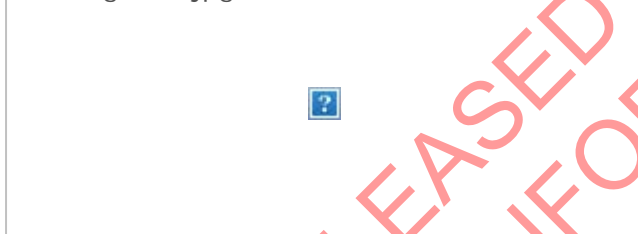
Laurie Edwards – Manager Communications

Ministry for the Environment – Manatu Mo Te Taiao

Mobile **S9(2)(a)** Email: laurie.edwards@mfe.govt.nz Website: www.mfe.govt.nz

23 Kate Sheppard Place, Thorndon, Wellington 6143

cid:image003.jpg@01D26A65.99010DF0



From: Media
Sent: Monday, 13 August 2018 8:46 AM
To: Laurie Edwards <Laurie.Edwards@mfe.govt.nz>; Gemma O'Sullivan <Gemma.O'Sullivan@mfe.govt.nz>; Stephanie Slattery <Stephanie.Slattery@mfe.govt.nz>; Kate Lancaster <Kate.Lancaster@mfe.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: Glyphosate

From: **S9(2)(a)**
Sent: Monday, August 13, 2018 8:44:34 AM (UTC+12:00) Auckland, Wellington
To: Media
Subject: Glyphosate

Hi

I'm working on a story on the above this morning. Can you answer the following:

1. Amount used annually in NZ?
2. The crops on which it is used?

3. How many years it has been used in NZ?
4. What the alternatives are (other than going organic)? What are the names of some of the products that could be used in its place?
5. Can you give me a general statement about the court case in the US.

I'm working on this today so a response asap would be helpful.

Regards

Gerard Hutching

S9(2)(a)

Agribusiness editor

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