

From: [Ashleigh Watson](#)
To: [Maggie Vickers](#)
Cc: [Ministerials](#)
Subject: RE: PS-COR0166: Something that must be addressed with urgency by this National Lead Government.
Date: Friday, 23 February 2024 11:23:00 am
Attachments: [CORM-2024 Grant Maconaghie.docx](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image003.jpg](#)

Kia ora

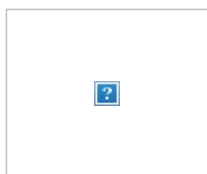
Please find attached the Ministry's proposed response to CORM-2024

Ngā mihi nui

Ashleigh Watson [she/her](#)
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Ministerial Services
Ministry for the Environment | Manatu Mo Te Taiao
027 416 5034 | Ashleigh.Watson@mfe.govt.nz | environment.govt.nz

From: Maggie Vickers <Maggie.Vickers@parliament.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, February 5, 2024 2:55 PM
To: Ministerials <ministerials@mfe.govt.nz>
Subject: PS-COR0166: Something that must be addressed with urgency by this National Lead Government.

Hi team,
Please can we have a response from Min Simmonds - 15 working days.
Please provide CORM# when loaded.
Cheers
Mags



Maggie Vickers
Private Secretary Environment
Office of Hon Chris Bishop - Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Office of Hon Penny Simmond – Minister for the Environment

M: 027 208 0542
Email: maggie.vickers@parliament.govt.nz Website: www.Beehive.govt.nz
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

From: Penny Simmonds (MIN) <P.Simmonds@ministers.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2024 4:28 PM
To: Maggie Vickers <Maggie.Vickers@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: Something that must be addressed with urgency by this National Lead Government.

Hi Maggie,

Email re: recycling below, they'd like a response from Minister Simmonds.

Kind regards,



Iain Forsyth
Private Secretary (Administration) | Office of Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for Disability Issues | Environment | Tertiary Education and Skills
Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment

P: 04 817 6815
Private Bag 18041, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

Authorised by Hon Penny Simmonds, Parliament Buildings, Wellington

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From: S 9(2)(a)
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2024 9:54 AM

To: Penny Simmonds (MIN) <P.Simmonds@ministers.govt.nz>; Simeon Brown <Simeon.Brown@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: Mayor of Auckland - Wayne Brown <Mayor.Wayne.Brown@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz>; Christopher Luxon <Christopher.Luxon@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: Something that must be addressed with urgency by this National Lead Government.

Good morning, Minister, Prime Minister, and Mayor of Auckland Wayne Brown and my hard-working MP & Prime Minister, Christopher Luxon.

New Zealand markets itself and is seen as “clean and green” when in reality that perception is so far from the truth it's laughable when we are compared to a growing number of countries globally !

I have just had a long-standing former colleague of mine visit from Finland, and over dinner we somehow ended up talking about how New Zealand is seen globally as largely clean and green.

Petri educated me by pointing out that Scandinavian & Nordic Countries along with an ever-growing number of European Countries, stopped burying rubbish for many years. Burying rubbish is seen as archaic and is non-existent in countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Luxemburg, Slovenia, and Finland **to name but a few!**

Here in New Zealand, we bury most of our domestic rubbish albeit a “small” percentage of it that is incinerated.

To show that we are years behind in the global sense of managing and using our cities and our countries waste: Only 1% of Sweden's trash is sent to landfills. They also generate electricity by burning domestic rubbish and some industrial rubbish which generates electricity. Another 52% is converted into energy and the remaining 47% gets recycled and is used to make new products in many cases. The amount of energy generated from waste alone provides heating to one million homes and delivers electricity to 250,000 homes.

Sweden also recycles **an astonishing 99 percent** of its locally produced waste, thanks to its citizens who are actively concerned for the environment and they use sophisticated collection techniques to ensure their collection processes are work ! The percentage of household waste recycled has increased from 38 percent in 1975 to at least 99 percent as of 2019 and getting better each year.

According to the Swedish government, **4,600,000 tons** of household waste were managed in 2020, which equates to 449 kilograms per person per year. 54% of household **and similar waste was converted to energy in 2020**. 86% of PET bottles and 87% of aluminium cans in the deposit system were recycled in 2020. This is slightly below the national target of 90% for both. 61% of all packaging materials were recycled in 2020, with a desired target of 65%. **The zero-waste policy has led Sweden to run out of garbage**, Sweden's waste imports (*used to power electricity generation*) quadrupled between 2005 and 2014. Almost 2.3 million tonnes of waste were imported from the UK, Norway, Ireland, and other countries in 2016 and it grows every year. All of these countries are now well ahead of the numbers quoted up to 2016.

At the risk of being rude & unhelpful, what is wrong with this country ?

Our politicians from successive Governments have done very little in this space. Successive Governments and their Ministers with portfolios of responsibility in this area have historically looked bewildered and out of their depth when the subject comes up and then the subject disappears off the radar – obviously too hard or complex ! Successive Governments have done very little in this space at all.

We live at the bottom of the world; a relatively peaceful country and we continually rabbit on about how we are clean and green. Given we've said it for so long, people around the world think we are, nothing could be further from the truth ! **The fact is we are miles behind the rest of the first world countries and some third world countries, we are the mouse that roars !**

I typically vote National, and I'm not a greenie, I just think we as a country and a people need to stop talking about this subject as if we are a global leader for the environment and that we actually need to shut up and get on with it as the old saying says. I suspect most of us don't want our country to be a bloody rubbish dump, which it's rapidly becoming as we bury a hell of a lot of domestic and industrial waste in New Zealand.

Scandinavian Countries & the Nordic Countries with populations similar to ours & the growing numbers of European Countries are actually and practically doing something positive instead of just talking about it as we seem to do in New Zealand. They are as an example legislating that soft drink companies can only make and supply plastic bottle tops that are made of plastics that can be recycled just as the bottles they are fitted to are. You don't have to be a brain surgeon to work it out really !

That alone ensures the bottles and the tops, if that are affixed, can be recycled in totality, not buried ! Small things making huge improvements, and my understanding is this is already happening in many countries so why aren't we making it happen here ? Small steps that are repeated with other products will see huge improvements !

We legislate for all manner of dumb stuff, so for once let's compel the drink suppliers by legislation to make the plastic tops on their recyclable plastic bottles totally recyclable, and if we do that the drink companies simply won't

be able to sell their drink products here unless they comply with the law. Don't let anyone tell you it's not doable, its being done globally already in many countries for over a decade now, and it's a money spinner as well, it pays for itself and quickly.

I would greatly appreciate a reply from the Minister for the Environment & a reply from the Mayor of our country's largest City, this is important going forward, if we as a country and a people don't grow up and deal with these matters with some urgency.

This is also an obvious opportunity for a National led Government to show the Green's and the Labour Party Opposition that a National Led Government sees this issue an important subject for our country and our people to address with some urgency.

NB: Copied to the office of the Prime Minister who is my MP and also copied to the Mayor of our country's largest city.

Rgds, s 9(2)(a)

Hon Penny Simmonds

Minister for Disability Issues
Minister for the Environment
Minister for Tertiary Education and Skills
Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment



PS-COR-0166/CORM-2024

Date

s 9(2)(a)

Dear s 9(2)(a)

Thank you for email of 1 February 2024 to me and the MP for Pakuranga, Simeon Brown sharing your concerns and insights regarding New Zealand's rubbish and recycling. I am responding to your email as the issues you raise relate to my portfolio of responsibility as Minister for the Environment.

This Government acknowledges that New Zealand faces significant long term environmental challenges which we are committed to seriously addressing.

The Ministry for the Environment's (the Ministry's) waste strategy is a roadmap for the next three decades for a low-emissions, low-waste society built upon a circular economy. It is based on shifting us from taking resources, making them into something, using and then disposing of it, which is referred to as a 'linear economy,' to a 'circular economy' where extracted materials are used and reused for as long as possible. The New Zealand approach is to focus on the top part of the waste hierarchy by reducing the generation of waste in the first place, reusing as much as possible then recycling what we can before considering recovering energy from waste. The waste hierarchy is explained in more detail in the New Zealand Waste Strategy document, which can be found on the Ministry's website at: environment.govt.nz/publications/te-rautaki-para-waste-strategy-a-snapshot/

The Ministry has dedicated waste and resource efficiency staff that are committed to improving both how we manage our waste, and how much waste is created in the first place. In addition, the Ministry administer the waste minimisation fund, which funds projects that reduce waste. Recent initiatives that you may be aware of include:

- the kerbside standardisation scheme environment.govt.nz/news/kerbside-recycling-now-the-same-nationwide/
- a new national publicly accessible waste dashboard to improve the availability of waste data environment.govt.nz/news/making-waste-data-publicly-available/
- a tyre product stewardship scheme which aims to keep tyres out of landfill environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/regulations/regulations-supporting-tyre-product-stewardship/

In your email, you mention examples of overseas waste to energy schemes. The Ministry has taken initial steps to explore waste-to-energy schemes and assess their potential benefits in the New Zealand context. I have asked officials to investigate this in more detail during this parliamentary term. More information on waste to energy can be found on the Ministry's information sheet at: environment.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Files/waste-to-energy-guide-for-new-zealand.pdf.

Your letter also mentioned Scandinavian countries have enacted legislation requiring soft drink companies to produce and distribute plastic bottle caps that are recyclable. This is a form of extended producer responsibility. The Ministry of the Environment has commenced work on reviewing the Waste Minimisation Act 2008, in part to enable greater powers to regulate products and materials. Decisions about which aspects of the legislation to take forward have not yet been made. Further information about the Ministry's work on waste legislation reform can be found on their website at: environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/areas-of-work/waste/waste-legislation-reform/.

In summary, this Government is committed to seriously tackling the many environmental challenges we face, including waste, but we are still in the process of determining the most effective approach to accomplish this goal. I encourage you to regularly visit the Ministry's waste webpages, which will be updated in the following months as they progress with the work programme.

Thank you again for taking the time to write in about your concerns.

Many thanks/Kind regards,

E-sig

Hon Penny Simmonds
Minister for the Environment