



OIAD-1242

26 September 2024

9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 29 August 2024 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

The email and original draft of the [NZ-First authored draft of the "fast track"] bill received by MfE.

The Newsroom article

Your request referred to a Newsroom article which, when published, stated: *"On November 29 last year, officials from the Ministry for the Environment sent Bishop a draft of a Nationally and Regionally Significant Projects and Other Matters Bill."* That statement was factually inaccurate.

The Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) did not send the New Zealand First authored bill to the Minister for RMA Reform, Hon Chris Bishop, on 29 November 2023. Rather, the Office of the Minister for RMA Reform sent the draft New Zealand First authored Bill to the Ministry on 29 November 2023.

The Newsroom article has been updated and now reads: *'On November 29 last year, officials from Bishop's office sent the Ministry for the Environment a draft of a Nationally and Regionally Significant Projects and Other Matters Bill.'* You can view the updated article at this link: <https://newsroom.co.nz/2024/08/29/fast-track-in-the-works-for-three-years-with-projects-identified-before-election/>.

Understanding the context

When the [National Party and New Zealand First Agreement Coalition Agreement](#) was released on 24 November 2023, it stated that: *The Parties commit to establish a fast-track one-stop-shop consenting and permitting process for regional and national projects of significance. The process will include a referral by Ministers for suitable projects. A Bill to*

introduce this process and make other essential statutory amendments will have its first reading as part of the government's 100 day plan.

In December 2023, the Government repealed the Natural and Built Environment Act 2023 and the Spatial Planning Act 2023. When Cabinet agreed to repeal that legislation, it noted that the Minister for RMA Reform had received a detailed proposal from the Minister for Regional Development to introduce a new fast-track regime, and that this proposal would inform the policy development and legislative design of the new fast-track consenting regime.

The intent of the [Fast-track Approvals Bill \(the Bill\)](https://www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2024/0031/latest/LMS943195.html) is to provide a fast-track decision-making process to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and other development projects with significant regional or national benefits. The Bill was introduced to Parliament on 7 March 2024, with public submissions opening on 14 March 2024 and closing on 19 April 2024. The Environment Committee is due to report the Bill back to the House on 18 October 2024. The intention is to include listed projects in the Bill via an Amendment Paper (formerly known as a Supplementary Order Paper), at the Committee of the Whole House stage. We anticipate the Bill will be passed by the end of the year. The Bill, in its current form is publicly available at: <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/bill/government/2024/0031/latest/LMS943195.html>.

Addressing your specific request

The Ministry has identified two documents in scope of your request:

- Document 1: Email from the Office of the Minister for RMA to the Ministry, dated 29 November 2023.
- Document 2: The attachment to that email – “Nationally and Regionally Significant Projects and Other Matters Bill” (‘the bill’).

Document 1 is being released to you in full.

Document 2 is being released to you in part. Some information has been withheld under section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act, to maintain constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.

There has been significant public interest in Fast-track project applications and the Fast-track Approvals Bill more generally. As with all applications of section 9 of the Act, I have considered whether the public interest outweighs the need to withhold information. I am satisfied that, in the circumstances, the withholding of applicant details under section 9(2)(f)(iv) is not outweighed by other considerations that render it desirable to make the information available in the public interest.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decisions relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: ministerials@mfe.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo Gascoigne', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jo Gascoigne
General Manager – Resource Management System
Ministry for the Environment

Document schedule

Document no.	Document date	Content	Decisions	OIA sections applied
1	29 November 2023	Email from Private Secretary to Ministry	Released in full.	N/A
1	29 November 2023	Nationally and Regionally Significant Projects and Other Matters Bill	Released in part.	Section 9(2)(f)(iv)