



12 December 2024

OIAD-1404

9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 14 November 2024 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Can you please provide me the following:

- 1. What criteria or process was followed by the ministers to reduce the 342 projects recommended by the panel down to 149 projects?*
- 2. Where can I find the panel's report demonstrating the rationale and analysis for accepting or declining a project?*
- 3. Where can I find the officer's summary of submissions and the resulting analysis / advice that went to the Environment Committee?*

While the independent Advisory Group recommended to Ministers a total of 342 projects for inclusion in the Bill, Cabinet chose to include only 149 of them to better reflect the capacity from expert panels to assess and consent these projects. Because of the unprecedented level of interest in this process, it became clear that so many projects were suitable for 2A that having a separate list for Schedule 2B became unnecessary, so it is intended to be removed from the Bill.

The makeup of the final list is not a reflection of the quality of projects not listed, nor is it a sign that any future application to the Fast-track process for these projects would be unsuccessful.

There is one document in scope of part one of your request, titled "*Record of decisions and actions from the Fast Track Minister's Meeting on 10 September 2024*". This document is due to be proactively released by the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) in the near future, as part of a wider release containing advice to Ministers on the Fast-track Approvals Bill. Once published, I expect you will be able to navigate to the material through: <https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/acts/fast-track-approvals-bill/>.

The material being released will be carefully considered under the provisions of the Act. In some cases, information may be withheld under section 9 of the Act, but only where necessary and where the public interest in disclosure does not outweigh the need to withhold, as outlined in section 9(1).

The Advisory Group's report to Ministers is available on the Ministry for the Environment's website at: <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/acts-and-regulations/fast-track-projects-advisory-group-report-to-ministers-redacted.pdf>.

All submissions, reports and advice to the Select Committee is available on the Parliament website at: <https://bills.parliament.nz/v/Bill/083f0a7b-f182-41d5-0897-08dc3e31559c?Tab=sub>.

The Ministry's departmental report contains the information you have requested in part three of your request. Specifically, information on the number of submissions is provided on page 6, and pages 7 to 13 analyse the submissions breaking down by support and theme. The report can be accessed on the Parliament website at: https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/submissions-and-advice/document/54SCENV_ADV_083f0a7b-f182-41d5-0897-08dc3e31559c_ENV74124/ministry-for-the-environment-departmental-report.

For the reasons outlined above, I am refusing your request under section 18(d) of the Act as the information you have requested is or will soon be publicly available.

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.

Yours sincerely



Max Gander-Cooper
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Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao