



20 January 2025

OIAD-1415

9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 29 November and 4 December 2024 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*[regarding the issuance of coastal policy guidelines] can your legal guys advise which subsection of section 31 was operative? It would seem to me to be section 31(c)(i) "the application, operation, and effectiveness of the Acts specified in the Schedule in relation to the achievement of the objectives of this Act" Could that be confirmed?*

*Also the MfE 2024 guidance, page 12, mentions that supplements would be issued mid 2024 – is that available? "Two supplements will be published in mid-2024. These are: Climate change, sea-level rise and coastal hazards science: Coastal hazards and climate change guidance – Supplement A Community engagement principles and approaches, and practice methods: Coastal hazards and climate change guidance – Supplement B.*

*I note that the predecessor to the 2024 Guidance, issued in 2017, <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Files/coastal-hazards-guide-final.pdf> provides the following advice in the Box at the end of section 5.2, on whether there has been an acceleration in the rate of sea level rise: "Climate variability in different regional seas also extends the length of sea level monitoring record required before acceleration of the climate change signal becomes clearly evident. At the global scale, a detectable acceleration in sea-level rise is likely to emerge from the climate system variability in the coming decade (Fasullo et al, 2016), and probably later in regional seas around the Pacific (including New Zealand), where the climate variability is more pronounced (Marcos et al, 2016)." Is this still MfE's position?*

### Section 31

The Ministry for the Environment has not sought legal advice on 'which subsection of section 31 is operative'. The Ministry's Legal team does not provide advice externally, and the Act does not require an agency to create opinions. In these circumstances, I must therefore refuse this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist.

## 2024 Supplements

The planned Supplements A and B were never completed and therefore were not published, due to the Ministry prioritising other adaptation policy work. Therefore, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) as the documents do not exist.

## Sea level rise

The 2024 guidance is a full revision of the 2017 guidance, and therefore the 2024 guidance represents our current recommendations.

The Coastal Hazard Guidance summarises that how sandy coastlines respond to sea level rise is uncertain, in terms of coastal erosion and accretion processes. This is because sea level rise contributes to increasing uncertainty around several of the contributing processes that shape shoreline response.

As we do not have technical guidance on accretion it would be best for Councils to seek this from experts independently. Specific coastal geomorphological advice on coastal accretion processes is required on a site-specific basis, and Kāpiti Coast District Council have undertaken one technical report which covers erosion and accretion issues along their coastline.

We also point out this additional resource, the national coastal erosion model has become available since the Coastal Hazards Guidance was published. The resource can be found at: [coastalchange.nz](https://coastalchange.nz).

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision 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](https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment 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](mailto:ministerials@mfe.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



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Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao