



26 July 2024

OIAD-1172

9(2)(a)

Kia ora 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 22 July 2024, requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*Have the coal mining companies currently operating projects in NZ had to measure, report and ( promise to ? ) pay for methane emissions arising from underground and open cast mining ?*

*The Coalition Government postponed agriculture-based methane from schemes for reducing or offsetting those emissions.*

*Is the coal mining lobby in a “protected” space with an exemption from inclusion in climate gas reporting?*

*Or have their emissions been measured and reported, and free allocations been granted?*

*Do the West Coast and Waikato coal mines have any methane abatement systems at the mine heads?*

<https://ieefa.org/resources/growth-australian-open-cut-coalmining-raises-urgency-methane-abatement>

I have provided an answer to each of your questions below, along with some background information on the Government's intentions for agricultural methane emissions.

New Zealand's economy significantly depends on agriculture aligning sustainably with climate change objectives. Recently, the Government announced the establishment of an independent expert panel tasked with reviewing biogenic methane science. The panel will provide advice on New Zealand's domestic 2050 biogenic methane target, consistent with the principle of 'no additional warming'.

The Government has committed to introducing a fair and sustainable pricing system for on-farm agricultural emissions by 2030 to support emissions reductions without shifting production offshore. This includes, by 2025, enabling the measurement of on-farm emissions using standardised methodology developed by the Government.

Additionally, \$400 million will be invested over the next four years to accelerate the adoption of emission-reducing technologies. The Government is committed to working with the sector to identify viable pathways to achieving our emission reduction goals. More information on the Government's plan for reducing agricultural emissions can be found in the Agriculture chapter of the second Emissions Reduction Plan discussion document, available here: <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/climate-change/New-Zealands-second-emissions-reduction-plan-Discussion-document.pdf>.

**Have the coal mining companies currently operating projects in NZ had to measure, report and pay for methane emissions arising from underground and open cast mining?**

Yes, coal mining emissions have been covered by the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) since 2010. This includes emissions from the mining activity (fuel use and fugitive methane emissions) as well as from the eventual combustion of the mined coal, unless it is exported.

**Is the coal mining lobby in a “protected” space with an exemption from inclusion in climate gas reporting? Or have their emissions been measured and reported, and free allocations been granted?**

Coal mining is not exempted from emissions reporting. The emissions reported by coal mining under the ETS can be found here: <https://www.epa.govt.nz/industry-areas/emissions-trading-scheme/ets-reports/emissions-returns/>. Coal mining companies do not receive industrial allocation.


**Do the West Coast and Waikato coal mines have any methane abatement systems at the mine heads?**

I am refusing this question under section 18(e) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold any information on it. I recommend that you instead contact the relevant regional councils and mining companies. The West Coast Regional Council and the Waikato Regional Council are both subject to the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, which you can read about here: <https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/council/about-us/requests-for-official-information/>.

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](http://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



**Kate Whitwell**  
Manager – ETS Policy  
Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao