



23 October 2024

OIAD-1311

9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 9 October 2024 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

a copy of the application form and all supporting documents submitted to the Ministry for the Environment by Te Awa Lakes Unincorporated Joint Venture, in relation to its development project (Te Awa Lakes Project) that has recently been confirmed as a listed project in the Fast-track Approvals Bill. This is described as a 2,500 dwelling development on land at Horotiu on the northern edge of Hamilton City.

You may be interested to know that Ministers recently received a report from an independent Advisory Group with recommendations on the suitability of projects for inclusion in Schedule 2 of the Bill. Due to the high public interest in the Bill, the Ministry has proactively released the report on our website at the following link: <https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/acts/fast-track-approvals-bill/>. The report includes an overview of the terms of reference for the Advisory Group, and a summary of all assessed project applications, both successful and unsuccessful.

I would also encourage you to review the information that the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform, Hon Chris Bishop, has released on the Beehive website relating to the Bill. Hon Chris Bishop's press releases can be found at: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/minister/hon-chris-bishop>.

Due to the public interest in the Fast-track Approvals Bill and projects that applied to be considered for inclusion within the schedules of the Bill, the Ministry plans to proactively release material we hold relating to all applications on our website by 28 November 2024. Once published, you will be able to navigate to them through our website at: <https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/acts/fast-track-approvals-bill/>.

Therefore, the Ministry must refuse your request at this time under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information requested is soon to be publicly available.

Please note that the material proactively released on our website is likely to include redactions made under section 9 of the Act, particularly under the following withholding grounds:

- 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons.
- 9(2)(b)(ii) to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.

The 149 projects chosen by Cabinet to be listed in the Bill will be listed in Schedule 2 of the Bill once the Bill is reported back from the Environment Committee in mid-October. All projects listed in Schedule 2 of the Bill, once it is passed into law, will still be required to apply to an Expert Consenting Panel (Panel) for their consents. While the Bill process is faster than standard Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) processes, the Panel is still required to assess the environmental impacts of the project against the RMA, relevant national direction, and other relevant local planning documents, including Water Conservation Orders.

If they decide to grant an application, the Panel can also recommend conditions to ensure adverse effects of the project on the environment are managed appropriately. This process will be managed by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). More information about all projects in the consent process will be made available in due course on the EPA's website at: <https://www.epa.govt.nz/fast-track-consenting/status>.

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

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Frame', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Stephanie Frame
Manager, Fast Track Consenting
Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao