



15 October 2024

OIAD-1312

9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe 9(2)(a)

Thank you for request for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), which was transferred to the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) on 10 October 2024:

*We believe the process to cut red tape is good, however the decision making and criteria is not upfront. If the government want to stimulate the economy, why only include 149 projects (which need to go through an environmental assessment to get the nod) The questions are:*

1. *What was the criteria to make the list.*
2. *Who made the decision to make the list.*
3. *What conflicts and associations existed ensuring “mates” are looked after.*
4. *Why not be upfront about the criteria, who made the decisions and table any conflicts.*
5. *Where is the explanation providing reasons why the projects did not make the cut.*

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. 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.

In addition, the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform, Hon Chris Bishop, has recently released further information about how Ministerial conflicts of interest were managed during the consideration of projects for the Bill through a press release, including answers to your questions above.

Therefore, the Ministry is refusing your request under section 18(d) of the Act, as the information you have requested is now publicly available. You will be able to find the Advisory Group’s report on the Ministry’s website at: <https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/acts/fast-track-approvals-bill/>, and the Minister’s announcement on the Beehive website at: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-releases-more-fast-track-detail>.

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: [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Frame', written over a light grey grid background.

**Stephanie Frame**

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