



26 June 2025

OIAD-1596

9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 13 May 2025 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

I would like to request information held by your Ministry about seabed mining, and in particular I would like to request:

1. Information such as any Briefing to the Incoming Minister (BIM) to the Minister of Conservation, the Minister for RMA Reform, the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Resources or the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries that relates to seabed mining for sand or minerals.
2. Any work that has been done or is in progress relating to New Zealand's use of seabed mining since the 2016 report (NZ's experiences with adaptive management for seabed mining NZ's experiences with adaptive management)
3. Any information about the potential costs and benefits of seabed mining and if there is a lot of information then only information pertaining to seabed mining in either Bream Bay or in the Taranaki Bight
4. Any information that relates to a change in New Zealand's position on the international moratorium on seabed mining that NZ signed up to in 2022

Any other information such as discussion papers, emails, briefings, Cabinet papers that relate to the possibility of progressing seabed mining under the Fast-Track Approvals Act especially relating to the fast-track applications in Schedule 2 from McCallum Brothers for Bream Bay sand mining and Trans-Tasman Resources for mineral seabed mining off the coast of Taranaki including the risks to the environment of permitting that activity.

Finally, I would like to know which Minister or Ministers are mainly responsible for the two abovementioned fast-track applications (see bold above) as I would like to make requests for information from the appropriate ministers.

On 28 May 2025, you were informed the Ministry was transferring part 4 of your request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade as the information is more closely connected with their functions.

On 11 June 2025, you were informed of an extension to the timeframe to respond to your request of 10 working days to allow for necessary consultation.

## Seabed mining

The Ministry for the Environment has identified nine documents in scope of your request, as listed in the attached document schedule.

I am refusing to provide documents 2, 3 and 8 under section 18(d) of the Act as they are already publicly available here:

- <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/cabinet-papers-and-regulatory-impact-statements/seabed-mining-in-new-zealand/>
- <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/about-doc/role/publications/bim-2023/bim-ocean-issues-november-2023.pdf>

Documents 5, 6 and 7 constitute advice presented to the Environment Select Committee Inquiry into Seabed Mining. As the Committee has yet to present their report to the House, any advice provided by the department must be kept confidential and may only be disclosed with the Committee's authority. As this authority has not been given, I must refuse to provide these documents under section 18(c)(ii) of the Act as doing so would constitute contempt of the House of Representatives.

Some information within document 1 has been withheld under section 6(a) of the Act as making the information available would be likely to prejudice the international relations of the Government of NZ.

I have decided to partially release documents 1, 4 and 9 to you with some information withheld under section 6(a) of the Act. However, these documents will be provided to you within the next five working days once they have been finalised for release.

## Fast-Track Applications

Information regarding the McCallum Brothers and Trans-Tasman Resources Fast-track applications can be found on the Ministry's website through the following links:

- <https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/acts/fast-track-approvals/fast-track-projects/bream-bay-sand-extraction-project/>
- <https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/acts/fast-track-approvals/fast-track-projects/taranaki-vtm/>

The Advisory Board report to Ministers on projects to be listed in the Fast-track Bill (including the projects listed above can be found here - <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/acts-and-regulations/acts-and-bills/fast-track-projects-advisory-group-report-to-ministers-redacted.pdf>, while the Ministers' decisions can be found here - <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/fast-track-projects-released>.

As both projects were listed in the Fast-Track Approvals Act, they will both be considered by Expert Panels – not Ministers. All application information on these projects will be made available on the official Fast-Track website here: <https://www.fasttrack.govt.nz/projects>. As noted on this website, the Trans-Tasman Resources application is in-progress and has been passed to a Panel Convener, while the McCallum Brothers application will be available and show as in-progress when/if they lodge an application.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision to withhold information 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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M Barbati-Ross', written over a light blue horizontal line.

**Matthew Barbati-Ross, Manager – Marine**  
Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao

### Document schedule

Document no.	Document date	Content	Decisions	OIA sections applied
1.	6/10/22	BRF-2267: Seabed mining in New Zealand	To be partially released	6(a)
2.	29/03/23	Cabinet paper: Seabed mining in New Zealand	Refused in full	18(d)
3.	29/03/23	Cabinet minute: Seabed mining in New Zealand	Refused in full	18(d)
4.	Apr 2023	Key messages on seabed mining to support media queries	To be partially released	6(a)
5.	Jul 2023	Inquiry into Seabed Mining – Initial Briefing	Refused in full	18(c)(ii)
6.	Jul 2023	Seabed Mining Slides	Refused in full	18(c)(ii)
7.	Aug 2023	Departmental Report Inquiry into Seabed Mining	Refused in full	18(c)(ii)
8.	Nov 2023	Briefing to Incoming Ministers – Oceans Issues	Refused in full	18(d)
9.	Feb 2024	Seabed Mining bullets for Minister Simmonds	To be partially released	6(a)