



OIAD-62

9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 15 June 2021 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*...all advice given between 1-15 June on SNA's to Minister James Shaw.*

Your request has been refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist. The Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) has not identified any documents in scope of your request.

A letter from Hon James Shaw and Hon Nanaia Mahuta was sent to local authorities on 11 June 2021 regarding the progress on the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity. We have provided this document to you in full as it may be of interest to you.

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](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

*Electronically approved by Hayden Johnston*

Hayden Johnston  
**Director – Water and Land Use Policy**



11 June 2021

Local authorities  
Local Government New Zealand

Dear local authorities,

**Progress on the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity**

Thank you for your continued work to protect indigenous biodiversity in your regions and districts. We recognise this work can be challenging and we have heard your calls for improved clarity on the progress of the National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPSIB).

Almost 4,000 of our native plants and wildlife are currently threatened or at risk of extinction. The NPSIB will be crucial part of our Government's plan to halt the loss of indigenous biodiversity and protect what is unique about Aotearoa New Zealand.

The requirement to protect areas with significant habitats of indigenous biodiversity has existed under the Resource Management Act (RMA) for several decades. However, we acknowledge that local councils are at different stages in the process of meeting this requirement. Part of the reason for this is that no previous Government has provided guidance to councils on how they should identify those areas of significant indigenous biodiversity.

In most cases, the NPSIB requirement to identify Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) is not new. A large number of councils have already identified the equivalent areas. Many others are legally required to do so because the regional policy statement applying in their region requires it.

The NPSIB will provide standardised ecological criteria and process that would apply across the country on how SNAs should be identified. The criteria can be used to ensure consistency between local plans, and effective implementation of the RMA and the Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy.

The NPSIB will also enable councils and tangata whenua to work together to identify and protect biodiversity on Māori land. It will also ensure that the processes councils will need to follow to identify and manage an SNA is transparent and inclusive. Put simply, the NPSIB will provide councils with the regulatory tools to identify and protect SNAs.

Since public consultation concluded in March 2020, officials have been working through the 7000+ submissions and further developing the policy to ensure the NPSIB hits the right

balance of protecting biodiversity while providing for the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of people and communities.

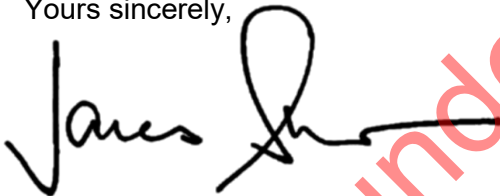
The next phase of development is to test this thinking through an exposure draft process in the coming months. We will be looking for feedback on the workability and practicality of implementation of the proposal. This will be an opportunity to work together to get this important work right. Our intention is to finalise the NPSIB by the end of this year.

Following gazettal, the implementation of the NPSIB will focus on supporting councils, iwi/Māori and other landowners to work together to identify, protect and restore the ngahere and the precious native plants and animals that live there. An implementation plan will also be developed to support local communities. The government's intention is to release this alongside the final NPSIB.

As New Zealanders, we all love getting out in nature. We also need development to occur in a way that meets the needs of current and future generations. One should not come at the expense of the other. That's what the NPSIB will help to ensure.

Once finalised, the NPSIB will be crucial to our efforts to reverse the decline of Aotearoa New Zealand's unique biodiversity and protect our natural taonga for generations to come. The NPSIB has been decades in the making and we look forward to working with you as it is finalised and we turn our attention to its implementation.

Yours sincerely,



Hon James Shaw  
**Associate Minister for the Environment  
(Biodiversity)**



Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
**Minister of Local Government**

Released under the Official Information Act 1982