



Section 9(2)(a)

Dear Section 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 19 October 2023 to the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

Our community group would like to know the findings of the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) after submissions were lodged some months ago regarding "Improving our GMO regulations for laboratory and biomedical research". Our community group was an original submitter, we not only lodged a submission but asked to be heard (and to kept informed) Our members (Maori and Pakeha) would like more information.

Can you advise, what was/ is the MfE recommendations in response to submissions lodged by Maori, local Iwi/ hapu on this topic?

Will there be any hearings?

We would also like a list of

-all submitters

-all Maori organisations (national and regional), Iwi/ hapu, etc including Te Waka Kai Ora (Maori organics).

Te Waka Kai Ora is the National Māori Organics Authority that represents Māori interests in the organic sector. Te Waka Kai Ora are in Treaty partnership with Organics Aotearoa New Zealand (OANZ) and are driven by the vision - Ki te manaaki te mauri o ngā taonga katoa.."

-MfE analysis of all submissions

-MfE findings/ recommendations in response to submissions lodged as soon as they are available.

On 17 November 2023, the Ministry extended the timeframe for its response to your request under section 15A(1)(b) of the Act, as consultations necessary to make a decision on the request were such that a proper response could not reasonably be made within the original timeframe.

In response to part one of your request, the Ministry is still analysing the submissions in response to the public consultation *Improving our GMO regulations for laboratory and biomedical research* that opened on 3 July 2023 until 25 August 2023. Therefore, the Ministry has not yet made any findings or recommendations. For this reason, this part of your request is being refused in full under section 18(e) of the Act, as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist at this time.

In response to part two of your request, because the public consultation was not part of a Parliamentary Bill no Select Committee hearings are to be carried out as part of this process.

In response to part three of your request, the Ministry has identified a list of 78 submitters who made a submission in response to the public consultation *Improving our GMO regulations for laboratory and biomedical research*. The Ministry has also identified a list of three Māori organisations, Iwi or hapu groups that made a submission in response to the consultation. The Ministry is releasing this list to you in part, with some of the information withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons. Please refer to the attached document '*List of submitters*'.

In response to part four of your request, as outlined in the Ministry's response to part one of your request, the Ministry is still analysing the submissions in response to the public consultation. Therefore, the Ministry has not yet made any findings or recommendations. For this reason, this part of your request is being refused in full under section 18(e) of the Act, as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist at this time.

In terms of section 9(1) of the Act, I am satisfied that, in the circumstances, the withholding of this information is not outweighed by other considerations that render it desirable to make the information available in the public interest.

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.

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry 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.

Yours sincerely



Glenn Wigley
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Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao