



OIAD-89

9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 21 July 2021 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- *Can you please provide the latest figures on the plastic bag ban?*
- *For example, how many, if any, charges have been laid against rule breakers?*
- *How many complaints have been made? And how high is compliance?*

A total of 535 reports were received by the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) since the ban started on 1 July 2019. Many retailers were reported several times resulting in 223 individual retailers reported.

A business being reported for using plastic bags does not necessarily mean they are in breach of the ban on single-use plastic bags. In some cases, businesses have used very thick plastic bags, over 70 microns, which are compliant with the regulations. Where a business was found to be using deficient bags, we have found in most cases this was through lack of knowledge. We have been able to achieve compliance by reminding them of their obligations, and the potential for penalties. As most New Zealand retailers have adapted to the ban quickly and with enthusiasm, no prosecutions have been necessary to date, therefore no fines have been issued.

The Ministry's compliance programme for the ban has shown a high level of compliance with the ban (97%). You can find more information in this media release environment.govt.nz/news/aotearoa-celebrates-two-years-of-plastic-bag-ban-success/.

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.

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.

Yours sincerely

Glenn Wigley
 Director – Policy and Regulatory – Waste and Resource Efficiency Division