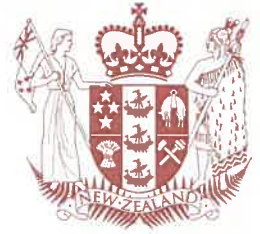


Hon Phil Twyford



MP for Te Atatu

Minister for Economic Development

Minister of Transport

Minister for Urban Development

19 AUG 2019

Matthew Hooton

fyi-request-10957-5b80122b@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Matthew

I refer to your request dated 12 August 2019, pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), seeking:

“There is very significant media and public interest in a letter you received as from your Associate Minister Julie Anne Genter about a Wellington transport package. For one example with links to other sources, please see https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12257246.”

You will note much of this media coverage suggests not only that the public is interested in the contents of the letter but that it is in the public interest for the letter to be released. This is because the letter clearly influenced major funding decisions you made as Minister of Transport, and also that the controversy that has emerged around the letter has created speculation that it may have improperly influenced you.

The full release of the letter is therefore now necessary to enhance respect for the law and to promote the good government of New Zealand. I also note the purpose of the OIA is to “increase progressively the availability of official information to the people of New Zealand”.

I therefore request the un-redacted letter under the OIA so that it becomes available to everyone on <https://fyi.org.nz>.”

I am withholding the letter in accordance with the following sections of the Act:

- section 9(2)(g)(i) of the Act, to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions between Ministers of the Crown;
- section 9(2)(f)(ii) of the Act, to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect collective ministerial responsibility.

I am of the opinion that there are no countervailing considerations that make it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act to make a complaint about the refusal of information to the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Yours sincerely

Hon Phil Twyford

Minister of Transport