

Hon Eugenie Sage

Minister of Conservation

Minister for Land Information

Associate Minister for the Environment

Minita mō Te Papa Atawhai

Minita mō Toitū Te Whenua

Minita Tuarua mō Te Taiao



- 5 MAR 2020

Niamh Peren
Thumbs Up New Zealand
niamh@niamhperen.com

Dear Niamh Peren

Thank you for your email of 7 January 2020 to my office requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

On 16 January 2020, you agreed with my office to refine the scope of your request to include:

... all correspondence between you, your office including all political and departmental officials, and the Ministry for the Environment, regarding labelling in relation to recycling, and Thumbs Up New Zealand in 2019.

I also seek all correspondence between you and your Green Party Colleagues on these subjects.

Correspondence includes: Cabinet Papers, WhatsApp messages, Texts/iMessages, Facebook Messenger, Emails, Transcripts of Phone Calls, Transcripts of Conversations, Letters, Briefings, Advisories, Aide Memoirs, Sound Recordings, Meeting Notes.

The scope of the first part of your request was interpreted as all available correspondence between me, my office and Ministry for the Environment officials, regarding labelling in relation to recycling, and Thumbs up New Zealand, between 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2019.

The Ministry for the Environment has identified 33 documents in scope of your request. There are 4 of documents which have been withheld under s9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act, as these documents relate to matters under active consideration. 29 documents have been partially released or released in full. We have included documents in which labelling (in relation to recycling) was mentioned in passing, including email attachments, as this falls under the scope of 'all correspondence'. Accordingly, much information within these documents has been redacted as out of scope of your request, or withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons
- 9(2)(f)(iv) to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials
- 6(a), 6(b)(i) and 9(2)(g)(i) to preserve international relations and international negotiating position, and officials' advice on these matters.

Under 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.

The table attached to this letter outlines the material in scope of your request and the decisions that have been made in withholding certain information or documents in full. Correspondence between the Minister's office and the Ministry pertaining to "Thumbs Up" includes administration relating to your communications. Regarding "labelling in relation to recycling", correspondence mostly includes ministerial letters to the public and some passing references in briefings and emails (and their attachments).

In regard to the second part of your request, political discussions with Green Party colleagues are not official information subject to the Act, so I have no information to release here.

As you are aware, following the release of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor's *Rethinking Plastics* report in December 2019, I have instructed Ministry officials to investigate options for improved product labelling that indicates recyclability. This work is in its early stages, and a number of matters are still under active consideration. I expect that you will be interested in this, and I understand the Ministry has invited you to discuss the opportunities and challenges of this work, given your significant work on Thumbs Up New Zealand.

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.

If you have any other queries about this response, please feel free to contact my office.

Yours sincerely



Hon Eugenie Sage
Associate Minister for the Environment

Document schedule

Document no.	Document date (sent between Minister's office and MfE)	Content	Decisions	OIA sections applied
1	25/01/2019	Email: RE: Interview about plastics	Release in part Note, out of scope information has been removed	s9(2)(a)
1.1	25/01/2019	Email attachment (document no.1): waste exports Indonesia – version 2	Release in full Note, out of scope information has been removed	N/A
2	27/03/2019	19-B-05267 New Zealand Government Response to the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment 2025: Plastics Action Plan	Release in full Note, out of scope information has been removed	N/A
3	02/05/2019	19-B-05412 National Resource Recovery Taskforce – updated work programme and funding options	Release in full Note, out of scope information has been removed	N/A
4	18/06/2019	Email: FW: Aluminium foil lidding	Release in part Note, out of scope information has been removed	s9(2)(a)
5	11/07/2019	Email: RE: Recycling in New Zealand	Release in part Note, out of scope information has been removed	s9(2)(a)
6	22/07/2019	19-B-05795 Briefing with talking points – Cabinet Paper Update on the resource recovery and circular economy work programme	Release in full Note, out of scope information has been removed	N/A
7	23/07/2019	Email: Actions from Minister Sage meeting 22 July	Release in part Note, out of scope information has been	s9(2)(a)

			removed	
8	02/08/2019	Ministerial letter: 19-M-01223	Release in part Note, out of scope information has been removed	s9(2)(a)
9	07/10/2019	Email: Actions from minister meeting 07/10/2019	Release in part Note, out of scope information has been removed	s9(2)(a)
10	14/10/2019	Email: RE: Lines for media topics for PM tomorrow	Release in full	N/A
10.1	14/10/2019	Email attachment: Background information on recycling labelling	Release in part	s9(2)(a)
11	25/10/2019	2019-B-06168 Co-design project for a New Zealand Container Return Scheme – October 2019 update and project funding approval briefing	Release in part Note, out of scope information has been removed	S9(2)(f)(iv)
12	30/10/2019	Email: Thumbs Up New Zealand – Petition – more information for meeting note	Release in part Note, attachments supplied by requestor	s9(2)(a)
12.1	30/10/2019	Email attachment: Letter of Support Councillor Penny Hulse – Auckland Council	Release in full	N/A
12.2	30/10/2019	Email attachment: Thumbs Up Recommendation	Release in full	N/A
12.3	30/10/2019	Email attachment: Letter to Thumbs Up New Zealand	Release in full	N/A
12.4	30/10/2019	Email attachment: Letter of Support – Thumbs Up Petition	Release in full	N/A
12.5	30/10/2019	Email attachment: Letter to Niamh Peren re Thumbs Up	Release in full	N/A
12.6	30/10/2019	Email attachment: Mayoral Letter of Support for Thumbs Up NZ	Release in full	N/A
12.7	30/10/2019	Email attachment: WWF- NZ supporting Thumbs Up	Release in full	N/A

12.8	30/10/2019	Email attachment: Letter of support – Thumbs up campaign	Release in full	N/A
12.9	30/10/2019	Email attachment: F&B Youth Support of Thumbs up	Release in full	N/A
13	31/10/2019	Email: Thumbs Up New Zealand – meeting note by Thursday 14 November please	Release in part	s9(2)(a)
13.1	31/10/2019	Email attachment: Letter of support from Mayor Cull for Thumbs Up New Zealand 30 Sept	Release in full Note, supplied by requestor	N/A
14	04/11/2019	Email: Talking points for Minister (petition presentation 5 November)	Release in part	s9(2)(a)
14.1	04/11/2019	Email attachment: Thumbs Up Petition- Talking points for 4 Nov 2019 (final)	Release in full	N/A
15	07/11/2019	Email chain: RE: Draft Environment Weekly Updates for week of 11 November 2019	Release in part	s9(2)(a)
16	12/11/2019	Email: Australian Environment Minister's agreed statement	Release in part	S9(2)(a)
17	14/11/2019	2019-B-06219 Minister Sage Meeting Note – Niamh Peren November 2019	Release in full	N/A
18	15/11/2019	Email: RE: Minister Sage meeting with Niamh Peren – Meeting Note	Release in part Note, accompanies above	s9(2)(a)
19	20/11/2019	Email: Thumbs Up Meeting	Release in part	s9(2)(a)
20	22/11/2019	19-B-06245 Rethinking plastics report: key recommendations and possible next steps	Release in full Note, out of scope information has been removed	N/A
21	25/11/2019	Email: Ministerials	Release in part	S9(2)(a)
22	28/11/2019	Email: RE: Follow-up on ministerial query raised in	Release in part	s9(2)(a)

		meeting with Niamh Peren of Thumbs Up		
23	29/11/2019	19-B-06280 Taking Action on Plastics – A proposed pathway forward	Release in full Note, out of scope information has been removed	N/A
24	06/12/2019	19-B-06309 Launch of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor's <i>Rethinking Plastics in Aotearoa New Zealand</i> report	Release in full Note, out of scope information has been removed	N/A
25	08/12/2019	Email: FW: EMBARGOED TO 10AM – PR PM Sage Govt Pledges next steps on plastic waste	Release in part Note, information publicly available here	s9(2)(a)
26	10/12/2019	Email: RE: Niamh Peren – contact person please	Release in part	s9(2)(a)
27	13/12/2019	Email: RE: Niamh Peren: Update from the Ministry for the Environment – labelling work in 2020	Release in part Note, direct correspondence with requestor	s9(2)(a)
28	16/12/2019	Ministerial letter: 19-M-02610	Release in part	S9(2)(a)
29	19/12/2019	Ministerial letter: 19-M-02728	Release in part	S9(2)(a)
30	08/04/2019	19-C-05265 FINAL Update of Waste and Resource Efficiency Work Programme	Withheld	S9(2)(f)(iv)
31	21/08/2019	Email: Feedback from Minister Sage's meetings in Auckland – Wed 14 and Thurs 15 August	Withheld	S9(2)(f)(iv)
32	11/09/2019	2019-B-05989 Talking points for Cabinet Paper <i>Update on a Container Refund Scheme for New Zealand</i>	Withheld	S9(2)(f)(iv)
33	05/11/2019	19-B-06199 Minister Sage's briefing pack for meeting of environment ministers 2019	Withheld	S6(a), S6(b)(i) and S9(2)(g)(i)