

# Hon Damien O'Connor



## MP for West Coast-Tasman

Minister of Agriculture

Minister for Biosecurity

Minister for Food Safety

Minister for Rural Communities

Minister of State for Trade and Export Growth

MinOIA20-0049

J Bruning

fyi-request-13002-4bd7c33e@requests.fyi.org.nz

26 AUG 2020

Dear J Bruning

Thank you for your email of 2 June 2020 requesting information relating to advice I have received on the Organic Products Bill (the Bill). Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You specifically requested:

- (a) *Copies of all the papers, briefings, noting papers, aide memoire or other documents on the Bill that you have tabled for consideration either by Cabinet, or by a Cabinet Committee, including the dates of each document and its title;*
- (b) *The content that relates to the Bill from all the weekly briefings you have received from the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI);*
- (c) *A list of the dates, places and people with whom you have met regarding the Bill.*

On 8 June 2020, MPI transferred a request for submissions and advice, received from you, to my office for response. I shall answer both requests within this response.

I am releasing to you copies of the following advice documents I have received in relation to the Bill:

B17- 0617	<i>Progressing a national organic standard</i>	20 November 2017
AM17-0903	<i>Update on Organics</i>	13 December 2017
B18-0064	<i>Consulting on a national organic standard</i>	13 February 2018
AM18-0018	<i>Talking Points for Organics Aotearoa New Zealand Forum and Dinner – 21 February</i>	16 February 2018
B18-0244	<i>Proposed consultation on a national organics regime</i>	23 March 2018
AM18-0475	<i>Meeting with Organics Aotearoa New Zealand (OANZ), organics consultation details, and press release</i>	3 May 2018
AM18-0172	<i>Launch of the Organics Aotearoa New Zealand Organic Market Report 2018 - Wednesday 20 June</i>	15 June 2018
B18-0587	<i>Report back from consultation on a national organics regime</i>	19 July 2018
Sub18-0021	<i>Final documents to support consultation on a national organic regime</i>	6 April 2018
B18-0641	<i>Proposed approach to legislation to enable a national organic standard</i>	18 September 2018

AM18-1120	Meeting with Organics Aotearoa New Zealand (OANZ) 18 October 2018	16 October 2018
Sub18-0110	Proposed legislation to enable organic standards	31 October 2018
AM19-0210	Update on organics work across MPI	22 March 2019
B19-0117	Proposed consultation on proposals for a regime for checking compliance against a national organic standard	13 May 2019
AM19-0622	Meeting with Brendan Hoare from Buy Pure New Zealand	21 August 2019
AM19-0669	Organics Aotearoa New Zealand AGM	21 August 2019
B19-0432	Update on the Organic Products Bill	26 August 2019
AM19-1013	Background for Attendance at 3rd Annual Hirshberg Entrepreneurship Institute Workshop	18 November 2019
AM20-0086	Event to announce the Organic Products Bill and the new regulatory regime for organics	19 February 2020
AM20-0204	Meeting with Organics Aotearoa New Zealand	2 April 2020

Some of the information within the scope of your request has been publicly released:

- Cabinet paper Sub19-0112 Organic Products Bill: Approval for Introduction, available here:  
<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/39767-sub19-0112-appendix-one-leg-cabinet-paper-redacted-for-proactive-release-pdf>
- Cabinet paper Sub19-0113 Proposed Organics Regulations: Release of Discussion Document, available here:  
<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/39761-sub19-0113-appendix-six-dev-paper-regulation-proposals-for-proactive-release-pdf>

Please note that the timeframes discussed in the documents above for the development of the Organic Products Bill and the associated regulations are not current. This process took more time than initially anticipated, in part due to the impact of COVID-19. Current information about the progress of the Bill is available on the website of the New Zealand Parliament at the following link: [https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/bills-and-laws/bills-proposed-laws/document/BILL\\_94967/organic-products-bill](https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/bills-and-laws/bills-proposed-laws/document/BILL_94967/organic-products-bill).

I am refusing your request for information from my Weekly Status Update Reports that relates to the Bill. It would require going through every report generated weekly since 26 October 2017, then identifying and extracting any content that mentions the Bill. This portion of your request is refused pursuant to 18(f) of the OIA – *that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.*

Additionally, I am refusing your request for a list of the dates, places and people with whom I have met regarding the Bill pursuant to section 18(d) of the OIA *that the information requested is publicly available.* My Ministerial diary is published each month and available through the following link:  
[https://www.beehive.govt.nz/search?f%5B0%5D=content\\_type\\_facet%3Aministerial\\_diary&f%5B1%5D=ministers%3A6389&f%5B2%5D=government\\_facet%3A6203](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/search?f%5B0%5D=content_type_facet%3Aministerial_diary&f%5B1%5D=ministers%3A6389&f%5B2%5D=government_facet%3A6203)

Some information has been withheld pursuant to the following sections of the OIA:

- Section 9(2)(a) – *the withholding of this information is necessary to protect the privacy of natural persons;*
- Section 9(2)(f)(iv) - *the withholding of the information is necessary to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials.*

I am satisfied that in the circumstances of this case, the withholding of the information is not outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable in the public interest to make the information available.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. Should you have any concerns with this response, you are advised of your right to raise your concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6011 or at [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'D' followed by a smaller, more complex scribble, all connected by a horizontal line.

Hon Damien O'Connor  
**Minister of Agriculture**  
**Minister for Food Safety**