

7 June 2018

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Jason McIntosh
By email: fyi-request-7821-6c741391@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr McIntosh

Response to your requests for official information – Ref: H201803681 and H201803738

Thank you for your requests of 24 April 2018 and 16 May 2018 under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Specifically:

On 24 April 2018 you wrote to the Ministry for the Environment asking:
“Does your ministry or any other govt entity monitor the radiation levels in our water, air and food? If not why not?”

On 16 May 2018 you wrote to the Ministry of Health and asked:
“Who is monitoring the radiation levels in our air and fish stocks? Is this monitoring actually occurring? Is the information obtained being suppressed for commercial reasons? If radiation levels aren’t being monitored then my question is ‘why not?’.”

On 9 May 2018 the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) received a partial transfer of the request you made to the Ministry for the Environment (ref H201803681). The part of your request transferred to the Ministry for response relates to monitoring of “radiation levels in our water and air...” The remaining part of your question relating to radiation levels in food was transferred to the Ministry for Primary Industries because that agency deals with radiation levels in food.

Your questions have been broken down with responses itemised below:

Request	Response
<p><i>“Does your ministry or any other govt entity monitor the radiation levels in our water, air.....If not why not?”</i></p> <p><i>“Who is monitoring the radiation levels in our air and fish stocks? Is this monitoring actually occurring?”</i></p>	<p>Yes there is monitoring of radiation levels in air, water and fish stocks. The Ministry of Health’s Office of Radiation Safety oversees a program of monitoring for evidence of radioactivity in the environment. This includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring the atmosphere at stations in Kaitaia, Chatham Island and Rarotonga. This is part of the global monitoring system established under the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty • Rainwater monitoring at Hokitika • Milk powder analysis of samples from Waikato, Taranaki and Westland • Monitoring of seawater at Christchurch.


	In addition to the program directly overseen by the Office of Radiation Safety, further testing is carried out by GNS Science of the atmosphere and Baring Head and rainwater at Kaitoke.
<i>"Is the information obtained being suppressed for commercial reasons?"</i>	<p>No information from monitoring is being suppressed for commercial reasons. All of the information from these monitoring programs is freely available through the Office of Radiation Safety.</p> <p>The Office of Radiation Safety is currently collating the information into summary reports so that they can be uploaded to the Ministry's website. This should take place by the end of June 2018.</p>

In preparing this information please note that:

- The Ministry of Health's Office of Radiation Safety administers the Radiation Safety Act 2016 and the Radiation Safety Regulations 2016 on behalf of the New Zealand Government. This legislation controls all dealings with ionising radiation.¹
- Radioactivity continues to be at levels that are below detection levels in many cases, and significantly below levels that would give rise to health concerns. No radioactive contamination from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident has been observed in the New Zealand environment
- If you require further information please contact the office via email (orsenquiries@moh.govt.nz).

I trust this information fulfils your requests.

Yours sincerely



Dr Stewart Jessamine
Director
Protection, Regulation and Assurance

¹ <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/radiation-safety?mega=Our%20work&title=Radiation%20safety>