

# Hon Casey Costello

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Minister of Customs  
Minister for Seniors  
Associate Minister of Health  
Associate Minister of Immigration  
Associate Minister of Police



20 MAR 2024

Adam Irish  
fyi-request-25792-233ccac4@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: OIA-038

Dear Adam

## Response to your request for official information

I acknowledge your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 19 February 2024 for:

*“... information pertaining to interactions with tobacco lobbyists within your office.*

*Specifically, I would like to know how many times tobacco lobbyists have visited your office, the dates of these interactions, and the topics that were discussed during these meetings and request any emails between you and them.*

*Additionally, I am seeking clarification on when it became an NZ First election manifesto commitment to include a commitment to repeal smoke-free legislation. I assume this was after the election.*

*Furthermore, I am interested in understanding if there were any communications between NZ First's leadership and your office regarding this policy change, and if so, I would appreciate these communications. Additionally what if any financial contributions have you or NZ first received from the tobacco industry.*

*Given the transition of some NZ First former staffers, such as Apirana Dawson, to the tobacco industry, have any declared financial conflicts of interest been made by you or other members of the NZ First cabinet.”*

I can advise you that I have not had any meetings with tobacco lobbyists. I am therefore declining this portion of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist. I note that my diary is also proactively released on the Beehive website every month (<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/minister/hon-casey-costello>).

New Zealand First's 2023 Manifesto ([https://www.nzfirst.nz/2023\\_policies](https://www.nzfirst.nz/2023_policies)) contained policy proposals for repealing aspects of the smokefree legislation. These policies were superseded by the Government Coalition Agreement and Cabinet decisions.

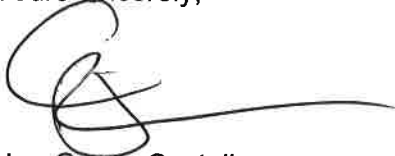
Your request for communications between New Zealand First's leadership and my office, as well as any financial contributions from the tobacco industry, is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist. Information on donations to the New Zealand First party can be found on the Electoral Commission's website

(<https://elections.nz/democracy-in-nz/political-parties-in-new-zealand/party-donations-and-loans-by-year/>).

Your request for declared financial conflicts of interest involving the tobacco industry is declined under section 18(e), as the information requested does not exist.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: [info@ombudsman.parliament.nz](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by calling 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Casey Costello', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Hon Casey Costello