

# Hon Nicola Willis

Minister of Finance  
Minister for the Public Service  
Minister for Social Investment  
Associate Minister of Climate Change



05 MAR 2025

Charles Lawson  
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Dear Charles

Thank you for your Official Information Act request, received on 7 February 2025. Your request was as follows.

*I am writing to formally request information under the Official Information Act 1982 regarding the reckless and unnecessary expenditure of taxpayer money on international climate agreements—particularly the Paris Accord—without any public referendum or democratic input.*

*It is unacceptable that billions of taxpayer dollars are being funneled into overseas climate initiatives while hardworking New Zealanders are struggling with rising living costs, inflation, and economic hardship. This government has forgotten its duty to the people, passing legislation and bills without so much as consulting those who fund it—you know, the taxpayers.*

*My Requests for Information:  
Total Climate Expenditures Without Public Approval:*

*A full breakdown of taxpayer money spent on international climate agreements (including UN climate funds and carbon credit schemes) since New Zealand signed the Paris Agreement.  
The projected future cost of all climate-related commitments, including net-zero policies.  
Any reports detailing why these huge financial commitments were made without a public referendum.  
Economic Consequences on New Zealanders:*

*Internal government assessments on how these climate-related expenses are impacting New Zealand's economy, cost of living, and employment rates.  
Official documents discussing how these policies contribute to higher fuel prices, energy costs, and inflation.  
Any financial impact reports on how local businesses and farmers have been affected by government-imposed carbon policies.  
Who Profits from These Policies?*

*A list of corporations, organizations, and individuals that have received government funding, subsidies, or contracts related to climate initiatives.  
Communications or meetings between government officials and private sector investors, climate lobbyists, and foreign entities benefiting from these policies.  
Government Transparency & Democratic Process:*

*A record of any public referendums, consultations, or votes that allowed New Zealanders to have a say in these financial commitments.*

*Any official documents outlining why the government chose to bypass the public in making these financial decisions.*

*Details on whether there are plans to hold future public votes on major climate-related financial decisions.*

*The Bigger Issue: You Work for Us, Not Yourselfes New Zealanders are tired of out-of-touch politicians making decisions without our consent while wasting our hard-earned tax dollars on globalist agendas. The government works for the people, not the other way around—but this has clearly been forgotten, as seen by the constant stream of legislation being pushed through Parliament without any public say.*

*We demand full transparency, accountability, and the right to decide how our money is spent. The public should have a vote on whether New Zealand continues to throw money at overseas climate projects while our own economy suffers.*

Below is a response to your queries, with links to publicly available information where relevant.

["Total Climate Expenditures Without Public Approval":](#)

**“A full breakdown of taxpayer money spent on international climate agreements (including UN climate funds and carbon credit schemes) since New Zealand signed the Paris Agreement. The projected future cost of all climate-related commitments, including net-zero policies.”**

The Paris Agreement is the global climate treaty which seeks to limit global warming. Under the Agreement, every country needs to set a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). The main purpose of an NDC is to outline the contribution countries intent to make towards delivering on the goals of the Agreement.

New Zealand currently has two announced NDCs: The first NDC covering the period 2021 - 2030, and the second NDC covering the period 2031 - 2035. Efforts towards these targets may include a mix of both domestic reductions and removals, as well as “offshore mitigation”, (that is, purchasing emissions reductions or removals occurring in other countries). To date, the Government has not spent or allocated public funds towards purchasing offshore mitigation or foreign carbon credit schemes.

Scenarios for the potential future cost required to purchase offshore mitigation towards the first NDC, covering the period 2021 - 2030, were included in the Climate Economic and Fiscal Assessment (CEFA) published by the Treasury and the Ministry for the Environment in 2023. The relevant chapter can be found here:

<https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-04/cefa23.pdf#page=81>

While the Government has not spent money on offshore mitigation to date, it does provide financial contributions to other international climate programmes. These include:

- In October 2021, the previous Government announced an international climate finance commitment of \$1.3 billion for 2022–2025. This represents funding New Zealand provides to support other countries’ efforts to reduce greenhouse gas

emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. New Zealand also had a previous commitment of \$300 million which covered the period 2019 - 2022.

- New Zealand makes an annual financial contribution to the administration of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which administers the Paris Agreement. The appropriation for this expenditure is currently \$170,000 per annum.

The Government does not project the future cost of all climate-related commitments, as these are dependent on Government policies and choices, and future costs of mitigation. However, the CEFA report above includes discussion and analysis of the possible fiscal costs of climate-related actions.

The potential future costs of the second NDC, covering the period 2031 - 2035, were explored through the advice provided to the Government in setting that target. This advice is due to soon be released under the Official Information Act by the Treasury and other relevant agencies. I recommend checking the websites of the Ministry for the Environment and the Treasury in the coming months for those information releases. As the information requested under this component of your request is soon to be publicly available, I have refused this part of your request under section 18(d) of the Official Information Act as the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

Further information about the potential costs of domestic emissions reductions measures is provided below.

The previous Government established the 'Climate Emergency Response Fund' (CERF) in 2021. The purpose of the fund, which was initially established at \$4.5 billion, was to support immediate emissions reductions and help lay the foundations for future reductions and removals. Our government closed the CERF as part of Budget 2024. Information on past allocations from the CERF is available in the Treasury website at the following link:

<https://www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/climate-change/climate-emergency-response-fund>

**“Any reports detailing why these huge financial commitments were made without a public referendum.”**

In general, the Government does not hold public referenda on individual policy decisions. As for any public spending, if public funds are required, these are considered through the annual Budget process, and approved by Parliament. This provides the legal authority for all public spending.

The first and second NDCs were decided by Cabinet. The setting of the first NDC in 2015 followed a public consultation process that ran from 7 May to 3 June. The details and results of that process can be found at this link:

[https://environment.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Files/nz-climate-change-target-summary-of-submissions\\_0.pdf](https://environment.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Files/nz-climate-change-target-summary-of-submissions_0.pdf)

The Government also sought feedback to inform setting of the second NDC between 8 December to 19 November 2024. The details and results of that process can be found here:

<https://consult.environment.govt.nz/climate/second-nationally-determined-contribution/>

There are no reports detailing why these decisions were made without a public referendum, as this option was not considered. Therefore, your request for the above information is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or cannot be found.

In relation to domestic emissions reductions, the Government is required by law to publicly consult on the development of each Emissions Reduction Plan. To date two Emissions Reductions Plans have been produced. You can find details of the public consultation for each here:

<https://consult.environment.govt.nz/climate/emissions-reduction-plan/>

<https://consult.environment.govt.nz/climate/second-emissions-reduction-plan/>

"Economic Consequences on New Zealanders":

**"Internal government assessments on how these climate-related expenses are impacting New Zealand's economy, cost of living, and employment rates. Official documents discussing how these policies contribute to higher fuel prices, energy costs, and inflation."**

As described above, New Zealand has not to date incurred significant expenses related specifically to its Paris Agreement commitments. Economic analysis has been conducted by officials to support Cabinet decision-making for the development of the first NDC in 2015, and also when Government enhanced the first NDC in 2021. This analysis has been previously released under the Official Information Act, and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-02/oia-20210527.pdf>

The Climate Economic and Fiscal Assessment (CEFA) 2023, referenced above, also includes analysis of the economic impacts of efforts towards NDC1.

For the second Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement (NDC2), the potential economic and fiscal impacts were modelled as part of the advice to Government on setting that target, and are soon to be released under the Official Information Act. As the information requested under this component of your request is soon to be publicly available, I have refused this part of your request under section 18(d) of the Official Information Act as *the information requested is or will soon be publicly available*.

New Zealand also has domestic emissions reduction targets, as set out in the Climate Change Response Act. Efforts towards these targets also form part of New Zealand's progress towards its Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement, which cover both domestic and offshore mitigation.

The economic impacts of domestic emissions reduction policies were analysed through the preparation of the Government's first and second Emissions Reduction Plans (ERPs). Details of these analyses can be found at the following links:

Work programme	Documents with analysis of economic impacts from domestic emissions reduction measures
First Emissions Reduction Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Aotearoa-New-Zealands-first-emissions-reduction-plan.pdf">https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Aotearoa-New-Zealands-first-emissions-reduction-plan.pdf</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Files/Aotearoa-New-Zealands-first-emissions-reduction-plan-Technical-information-annex.pdf">https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/Files/Aotearoa-New-Zealands-first-emissions-reduction-plan-Technical-information-annex.pdf</a></li> </ul>
Second Emissions Reduction Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/climate-change/ERP2/New-Zealands-second-emissions-reduction-plan-202630.pdf">https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/climate-change/ERP2/New-Zealands-second-emissions-reduction-plan-202630.pdf</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/climate-change/ERP2/New-Zealands-second-emissions-reduction-plan-2026-30-Technical-Annex.pdf#page=50">https://environment.govt.nz/assets/publications/climate-change/ERP2/New-Zealands-second-emissions-reduction-plan-2026-30-Technical-Annex.pdf#page=50</a></li> </ul>

In March 2024, the Treasury also published the below analytical note, analysing the household cost-of-living impacts of the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). The ETS is New Zealand's primary policy tool for reducing net emissions towards its targets, and functions by putting an "emissions price" in covered sectors.

<https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2024-02/an24-02.pdf>

**“Any financial impact reports on how local businesses and farmers have been affected by government-imposed carbon policies.”**

Beyond the materials provided above, I do not hold any further financial impact reports relating to the financial impacts of emissions reduction policies on local businesses and farmers.

“Who Profits from These Policies?”

**“A list of corporations, organizations, and individuals that have received government funding, subsidies, or contracts related to climate initiatives. Communications or meetings between government officials and private sector investors, climate lobbyists, and foreign entities benefiting from these policies.”**

The Government does not keep a centralised list of entities receiving funding, subsidies or contracts related to climate initiatives.

Two key examples of emissions reduction initiatives that have provided funding or financing to private sector entities are the Government Investment in Decarbonising Industry (GIDI) Fund (which our Government has closed) and New Zealand Green Investment Finance (NZGIF). Details of entities that have received funding or financing from these programmes are publicly available on their websites:

- GIDI: <https://www.eeca.govt.nz/co-funding-and-support/approved-gidi-projects/>
- NZGIF: <https://www.nzgif.co.nz/investing/our-investments>

Assembling a comprehensive list of communications or meetings between government officials and relevant private sector investors, climate lobbyists, and foreign entities would involve substantial time and resources. Therefore, I am refusing this component

of your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

"Government Transparency & Democratic Process":

**"A record of any public referendums, consultations, or votes that allowed New Zealanders to have a say in these financial commitments. Any official documents outlining why the government chose to bypass the public in making these financial decisions."**

Details of the consultation processes for the first and second NDCs and Emissions Reduction Plans are included in the response to the question about "Any reports detailing why these huge financial commitments were made without a public referendum" above. No other public referendums, consultations, or votes were held prior to the announcement of the NDCs.

**"Details on whether there are plans to hold future public votes on major climate-related financial decisions."**

There are currently no specific plans for public votes on major climate-related financial decisions. The Government will take decisions on any consultations and public votes related to these decisions as they arise.

This reply addresses the information you requested. 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



Hon Nicola Willis  
**Minister of Finance**