



7 April 2026

26-OIAD-00428

Nigel Gray

Tēnā koe Nigel

Thank you for your email of 21 February 2026 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) of the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry):

*I am seeking any information held by the Ministry for the Environment relating to sulphur dioxide emissions from shipping, their conversion into sulphate aerosols, their role as cloud condensation nuclei, and any resulting impacts on rainfall acidity, cloud formation, rainfall intensity, or acid deposition (commonly referred to as acid rain) within New Zealand's coastal or inland regions.*

*Please provide the following:*

*1. Monitoring, Modelling, and Data*

*Any monitoring data, modelling, assessments, or environmental measurements held by the Ministry relating to:*

*sulphur dioxide emissions from ships*

*conversion of sulphur dioxide into sulphate aerosols*

*formation of cloud condensation nuclei from sulphur compounds*

*impacts on cloud formation, cloud density, or rainfall intensity*

*rainfall acidity or acid deposition linked to maritime emissions*

*2. Internal or External Scientific Advice*

*Any internal or external reports, briefings, memos, scientific advice, or commissioned research relating to:*

*environmental impacts of sulphur dioxide or sulphate aerosols from ship exhaust*

*effects on soil chemistry, vegetation health, freshwater ecosystems, or coastal environments*

*any assessment of acid rain or acid deposition in New Zealand*

*3. Policy and Regulatory Considerations*

*Any documents, advice, or correspondence relating to whether sulphur dioxide emissions from shipping are considered within:*

*New Zealand's air-quality standards*

*national environmental reporting frameworks*

*maritime emissions policy settings*

*climate or atmospheric monitoring programmes*

*4. Inter-Agency Correspondence*

*Any correspondence between the Ministry for the Environment and Maritime New Zealand*

*NIWA*

*Ministry of Transport*

*Environmental Protection Authority*

*relating to sulphur dioxide emissions, sulphate aerosol formation, cloud condensation nuclei, cloud-seeding effects, rainfall acidity, or acid deposition.*

#### **5. Identified Gaps or Limitations**

*Any documents that identify gaps, limitations, or uncertainties in New Zealand's monitoring, modelling, or regulatory oversight of sulphur dioxide emissions from shipping.*

In response to point one of your request, the Ministry does not hold any such responsibilities and does not hold any such information specific to shipping emissions.

While this request may more closely align with the functions of Maritime New Zealand or the Ministry of Transport and would ordinarily be transferred under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act, we understand you have already made similar requests to both agencies. In these circumstances, we do not consider a transfer to be necessary.

I am refusing points two, three and five of your request under section 18(g)(i) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and we have no grounds for believing that the information is held by another department (for itself and for a departmental agency hosted by it or an interdepartmental executive board serviced by it) or interdepartmental venture or Minister of the Crown or organisation, or by a local authority.

Note we have interpreted point four of your request to refer to correspondence between agencies regarding the key terms you have raised resulting in impacts to weather. I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decisions relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found at: [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Please note that due to the public interest in our work, the Ministry publishes responses to requests for official information shortly after the response has been sent on our website at: <https://environment.govt.nz/about-us/official-information-act-requests/>. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team at: [ministerials@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:ministerials@mfe.govt.nz).

Nāku noa, nā



**Jo Gascoigne**

General Manager – RMA Operations  
Ministry for the Environment | Manatū Mō Te Taiao