

Official Information Act Request

Requester's details

Date: 20 May 2021

Name: [REDACTED]

Job title: Political Journalist

Organisation: New Zealand Herald

Email: [REDACTED]@nzme.co.nz

Reference number: ENQ-41452-J2V1C4

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request received on 29 April 2021 for the following information:

“I understand under the Basel Convention from January 1 this year companies were required to get permits in New Zealand from the EPA to export/import certain types of plastic waste.

How many such permits have been granted? And what do these permits cover?

What companies have applied for these permits?”

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has not yet granted any permits for the import or export of plastic waste. Between 1 January 2021 and 29 April 2021 the EPA received one application for the export of plastic waste, which is being processed. This application was made by New Zealand Panel Groups Limited.

The EPA is New Zealand's Competent Authority (CA) for the Basel Convention. As part of that role, we are responsible for issuing permits for the import and export of certain types of plastic waste. Once we have received an application, we will consult with other CAs along the shipping route and at the final destination. The permits will state the maximum amount of plastic waste that can be imported or exported; they can be issued for up to a year and cover a specific waste or plastic type. In addition, permits may have conditions specified.

Export permits for plastic waste can only be issued for one of more the following reasons:

- New Zealand does not have the technical capacity and the necessary facilities, capacity, or suitable disposal sites to dispose of the waste in an environmentally sound and efficient manner.
- The waste is required as a raw material for any recycling or recovery industry in the importing State.

- The exportation of the waste is in accordance with any criteria decided by the Basel Parties¹ or the OECD Parties², if applicable. The applicant must provide information to support and explain why this criteria applies.

Once a permit has been granted, the name of the importer or exporter, the waste product, destination, quantity, and when the permit expires will be uploaded to our website <https://www.epa.govt.nz/industry-areas/hazardous-substances/hazardous-waste/current-permit-holders/>

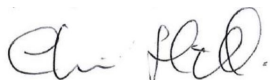
Further information regarding the import and export of plastic waste is available on the EPA website <https://www.epa.govt.nz/industry-areas/hazardous-substances/hazardous-waste/importing-and-exporting-plastic-waste/>

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. You can contact the Ombudsman on 0800 802 602, or by email at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us via ministerials@epa.govt.nz

We will publish your request and our response on our website, www.epa.govt.nz, within 10 working days from today. We make OIA responses available so others can read more about the work we do and the questions we are asked. Any information that might identify you will be removed to protect your privacy.

Nāku noa, nā



Chris Hill
General Manager,
Hazardous Substances and New Organisms

¹ Parties to the Basel Convention

² Members of the OECD