

DIRECTION & MINUTE OF THE DECISION-MAKING COMMITTEE

Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (“HSNO Act”)

Application APP203989: amendment to the firefighting foams group standard

Direction & Minute WGT001 of the Decision-making Committee (DMC) – 14 April 2020

Background

1. The EPA is currently assessing a proposed amendment to the Firefighting Chemicals Group Standard. The proposal, recommendations from the EPA and presentations from submitters will be considered by the DMC at a hearing.
2. A provisional date for the hearing has been set for the week of the 18th of May 2020.

Impacts of COVID-19

3. The DMC appreciates that the current COVID-19 pandemic may be affecting the way people work (both domestically and internationally), and their ability to participate in the application process including responding to directions and participating in the hearing, and other aspects of the amendment process.
4. The DMC acknowledges that there are currently COVID Alert restrictions imposed by the NZ government and it is not known when these will be lifted, such that these may be in place (to a varying degree) up to and during the proposed hearing date.
5. The DMC therefore considers that alternative methods of completing the application process with participation of all parties may need to be investigated. The DMC acknowledges that the EPA is looking into the best options to continue the statutory process on its current timeline.
6. In order to assess the best approach to processing the proposal to amend the group standard, the DMC is seeking input from all parties to the process to better understand their ability to participate in the application and hearing processes while the COVID-19 pandemic may be affecting their ability to work.

Directions

7. The DMC directs the following:
 - a. all parties to this application process to indicate what the impacts of COVID-19 are on their ability to participate in the process for the amendment, in particular:
 - i. Their ability to participate in the hearing should it proceed on the current proposed date, either in person should the COVID-19 alert protocols allow, or remotely via a method such as video or teleconferencing.
 - ii. Their ability to participate in any other aspect of the application process remotely, especially in relation to the provision of any information which the DMC may require in considering the application.
8. The DMC will continue to issue Directions and Minutes as necessary to advise parties to the process of further communications or procedural matters.

For the Decision-making Committee:



Environmental
Protection Authority
Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri

Dr Ngaire Phillips

Date 15 April 2020

Chairperson