



Hon Brooke van Velden
Minister of Internal Affairs
Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

1 December 2023

Dear Brooke

I am writing regarding your comments made on [TVNZ's Breakfast show](#) on November 28th, 2023. I quote:

“And when the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment looked at this ban after the fact, he said it's likely to increase global emissions because we still need electricity as a source.”

I note that a similar comment was also made in the [ACT Party Energy Policy](#):

“The decision to ban new offshore oil and gas exploration in 2018 was done without analysis, without a Cabinet decision, and without public consultation. It was subsequently revealed that there was no cost-benefit analysis and the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment found it would actually increase global emissions by forcing activity offshore.”

Both are incorrect and misleading.

The comments might be referring to the following passage from my report where – amongst other things – I did say that those who oppose the ban can legitimately claim that:

“The ban is unlikely to significantly reduce domestic emissions other than reduced fugitive emissions and reduced domestic emissions from the production of methanol if Methanex were to exit prematurely.”

I most definitely did **not** say that the ban would increase global emissions. In fact, I said that those opposing the ban must acknowledge that:

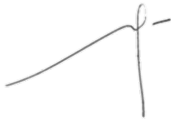
“There is no firm basis for claiming that it will increase global emissions.”

This is a nuanced issue, and I took care to ensure that my findings reflected that nuance. As someone whose role is to serve our Parliament, I put a great deal of effort into trying to help all MPs make sense of the often-complex issues they grapple with. In return, I rely on Members who wish to cite me in political debate to do so accurately.

You correctly cited my concern that the original ban was not the subject of a careful analysis of the costs and benefits. I would say that of any decision relating to the environment. Five years have passed since the imposition of the ban and much has changed since then.

It would create an excellent precedent if your decision to lift the ban followed a thorough analysis of the costs and benefits of such a step. I urge you to do so and would be happy to comment on the design of such an initiative.

With kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a long horizontal stroke on the left that curves upwards and then down to a vertical line on the right, with a small loop at the top of the vertical line.

Rt Hon Simon Upton
Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
Te Kaitiaki Taiao a Te Whare Pāremata