



Hon Shane Jones
Minister for Forestry
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

28 March 2018

Dear Shane

I am writing to you to request information regarding actions your Ministry may be undertaking in response to climate change issues highlighted in the environmental report *Our atmosphere and climate 2017*, published by the Ministry for the Environment and Statistics New Zealand under the Environmental Reporting Act 2015.

This request is made in relation to my role under this Act. As set out in Section 18, I have a broad role to comment on national state of the environment reports, which includes discussing implications of environmental reports and recommending responses to the findings contained within those reports.

Our atmosphere and climate 2017 contained information on significant increases in greenhouse gas emissions across the New Zealand economy since 1990. The report also highlighted the important role that the country's exotic and native forests can play in offsetting emissions from other sectors of the economy, but it noted that since 2006, rates of deforestation have far outweighed replanting rates.

I acknowledge that the Government has set a goal to plant one billion trees in the next ten years.

Given the significance of forestry in relation to our net emissions and your ambitious policy, could you please provide answers on what work the Ministry has done or is planning to do on the following:

1. *The development of policies or other mechanisms to reduce deforestation and encourage replanting as part of New Zealand's climate response.*
2. *Quantifying the effect of such policies or mechanisms on gross and net greenhouse gas emissions.*
3. *The roles different types of forests (such as plantations or reverting natives) should play in offsetting greenhouse gas emissions.*

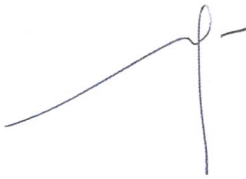
4. *The roles different sized forests should play in offsetting greenhouse gas emissions, including small scale plantings in production landscapes (e.g. riparian plantings and shelterbelts).*
5. *Improving and refining the way carbon stored in different types and scales of forest is measured and accounted for.*
6. *Ensuring that the environmental co-benefits of New Zealand's forest sector are maximised, and any negative environmental impacts are minimised.*
7. *Overcoming issues of coordination between government agencies, where greenhouse gas reductions require co-ordinated actions from multiple stakeholders.*

Our atmosphere and climate also highlights a range of climate-related impacts that are expected to increase including storms, invasive species and disease. These may well affect New Zealand forests. In relation to this, could you please provide information on any work the Ministry has done or is planning to do on the following:

8. *Managing the risks associated with using forest offsets, including those risks associated with climate-impacts.*

I would also welcome a meeting to discuss these issues with you following the reception of a reply to this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a long, sweeping horizontal stroke followed by a vertical line that curves slightly to the right at the top.

Simon Upton
Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment

CC: Gareth Hughes, MP; Alastair Scott, MP; David Seymour, MP