



Hon Chris Bishop
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

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11 July 2025

Dear Mr Bishop

I have been trying without success to arrange through your office a meeting to discuss a number of matters related to resource management law reform. For that reason, I'm writing to bring the request to your personal attention in the hope that something can be arranged in the near future.

I am, under section 16 of the Environment Act 1986, charged with reviewing the effectiveness of the environmental management system "with the objective of maintaining and improving the quality of the environment". The reforms of the environmental management system that you are leading represent the most significant upheaval in that system for three decades. It is thus a matter I am following closely and on which I will, in due course, have to advise the select committee designated to consider any proposed legislation.

The analysis I have undertaken as Commissioner, together with wide-ranging and ongoing consultation with farmers, developers, councils and consultants leads me to believe that I can offer some insights that may be useful to you and your officials. These are, needless to say, observations I would share with any parliamentary grouping or individual. But since you have leadership of the reform, it strikes me that it would be sensible to pass on my perspectives before you take final decisions. It will obviously be for you to decide whether they have any value.

Specifically, I would like to cover the following issues:

- The relationship between the proposed Environmental Act and the Spatial Planning Act.
- The crucial need to invest in the federation and upgrading of geospatial data.
- The relationship between national guidance and bottom-up decision-making, particularly in respect of land use management.
- The appropriate location of monitoring, reporting and compliance activities.
- The appropriate location of state of the environment reporting activities.
- The future role of regional councils and the wider issue of institutional change implied by any reforms.



I consider we could usefully spend 90 minutes on these topics. I hope you can find time for such a meeting. To be useful, a meeting would need to occur fairly soon given your plan to introduce legislation before the year's end. Alternatively, if you don't consider that such a meeting would be useful, please let me know so that we can stop pestering your staff.

Kind regards

Rt Hon Simon Upton

Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
Te Kaitiaki Taiao a Te Whare Pāremata