

Hon Simon Watts

Minister of Climate Change
Minister for Energy
Minister of Local Government
Minister of Revenue



COR2003

Rt Hon Simon Upton
Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
c/- Geoff.simmons@pce.parliament.nz

Dear Simon

I refer to your letter dated 27 November 2025 to the Minister of RMA Reform, Hon Chris Bishop and myself, regarding the Government's *Simplifying Local Government* proposal. Thank you for taking the time to review the proposal and share your considered thoughts.

Your observations about the need for stronger central guidance, particularly in areas such as catchment-level water modelling, biosecurity implementation, and federating environmental information, are highly relevant to the review we are undertaking. These align closely with the questions we are seeking to address regarding whether any regional council responsibilities may be better managed centrally or discontinued.

I agree that your expertise and the work your office has done in this area would add significant value to the process. I have advised officials at the Department of Internal Affairs (Department) to engage with you and your team early so that your input can inform key decisions.

I understand that officials from the Department are already in contact with your office.

I look forward to working with you to strengthen the future of local government and environmental management.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Hon Simon Watts
Minister of Local Government

cc Hon Chris Bishop – Minister Responsible for RMA Reform