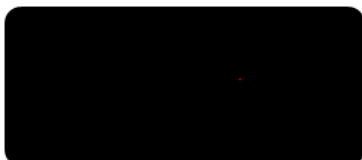




OIA17-0296

16 JUN 2017



Dear [REDACTED]

### OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

I refer to your official information request on 22 May 2017 relating exported water. Each of your questions is quoted and answered below.

The following information is released to you under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

1. *How many companies - businesses - or individuals - are licensed to - or are - exporting water extracted from New Zealand springs, aquifers, rivers, or any other type of water source - from New Zealand, and to which countries?*

The Ministry for Primary Industries' (MPI) records indicate that 34 businesses are registered to process, pack, bottle, store, transport, or distribute water. Each of these businesses is eligible to export the water they process, pack, bottle, store, transport, or distribute. MPI does not, however, maintain a list of companies that export water.

Therefore, this request is refused under section 18(g) of the OIA as the information requested is not held by the department and is not believed to be held by any other department of Minister of the Crown.

2. *Is there any protocol - or procedure - requiring extracted water (bottled or held in any other container or vessel) to be tested prior to leaving New Zealand shores? If so, what are the tests required to look for? (what contaminants - bacteria, etc)*

Operators of businesses processing or packing bottled water must ensure that their products are safe for consumption. They are subject to food safety and suitability requirements set by the Food Act 2014 and the Australia and New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code).

For example:

- the Food Act requires the operators of food businesses to ensure that food-related accessories (such as containers or other materials that come into contact with food) do not create a hazard in the food, and are able to maintain the safety and suitability of food (food includes packaged beverages);

- the Code Standard 2.6.2 sets compositional standards requirements for non-alcoholic beverages and soft drinks (including bottled water); and
- the Code Schedule 27 sets microbiological limits in food (including mineral water and packaged water). The microbiological standard for mineral water and packaged water is the non-detection of Escherichia coli in 100mL.

3. How many litres of water are estimated to be exported every year?

Similar to the response to question one, MPI does not record which companies export water or in what quantity. This information is of a commercial nature and is not held by MPI; this request is also refused under section 18(g) of the OIA.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the OIA to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of our decision.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Peter Thomson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter Thomson  
Director Plants, Food and Environment