



13 March 2025

Ref: DOIA-REQ-0008002-Claire Bleakley

Claire Bleakley  
Organisation: GE-Free New Zealand  
Email: [claire@gefrees.org.nz](mailto:claire@gefrees.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Claire

Thank you for your email of 8 January 2025 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

*Please could you provide all documents you considered relating to the Gene Technology Bill –*

*1. a. on published peer reviewed research that show safety to the environment and human health of Gene Editing trials?*

*b. Documents on how the GTB regime should enable the greater use of safe gene technologies that researchers are not already conducting?*

*c. How will exempt new gene technology products be verified as proportionate to the risks that each application poses?*

*2. All the documents you considered relating to*

*a. New Zealand missing out on economic opportunities and development of new technologies and the income it would generate.*

*b. What crops was New Zealand missing out on that are more resistant to disease, resistant to climate change and have enhanced nutritional content?*

*3. The Technology Committee members who wrote the GTB are all going to financially benefit from the introduction of this piece of legislation.*

*a. Are these going to be the same people on the Technology Committee who will be advising the Regulator?*

*4. There are many hundreds of laboratory applications approved under HSNO*

*a. Please provide all documents that MBIE considered in the development of the Gene Technology Bill that relate to the performance and outcome of the approved twenty field tests of GM plants, animals, and microorganisms.*

*b. What has been their commercial worth?*

*5. All research needs to have raw data to show the outcomes of any experimental process.*

*a. Please provide the grant amounts that MBIE has provided to the biotechnology sector for GM developments?*

*b. Were the compliance costs factored into the MBIE Foundation grants?*

*c. If not why not?*

I wrote you on 13 February 2025 responding to questions 3-5 and partially responding to questions 1 and 2. I am now writing with the remainder of MBIE's response.

Please find attached the information relevant to your request, which is detailed in the following schedule of documents released.

This information pertains to your questions at 1b, 1c and 2. We have interpreted your request as including any relevant information included in records of discussions we held with the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group, the Industry Focus Group and others. This includes meeting papers and minutes of those meetings.

MBIE is currently developing advice for the Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology on proposed secondary legislation that will contain technical detail to implement the exempted organisms and technologies and risk-tier frameworks in the Gene Technology Bill. These are key aspects of the regime that relate to your questions. Our discussions with the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group are an important input to development of that advice. However, as the advice for the Minister is still being developed, I am withholding some of this information. I consider it is necessary to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials (s 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Act) and I do not consider this is outweighed by public interest considerations. There will be a public consultation on the proposals the Minister decides to take forward following Cabinet consideration.

Other information is withheld on the following grounds in the Act, and I similarly do not consider the withholding of the information is outweighed by public interest considerations:

- 9(2)(a), to protect the privacy of natural persons
- 9(2)(b)(ii), to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information, and
- 9(2)(ba)(i), to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence or which any person has been or could be compelled to provide under the authority of any enactment, where the making available of the information would be likely to prejudice the supply of similar information, or information from the same source, and it is in the public interest that such information should continue to be supplied.

I am refusing under section 18(d) of the Act to release appendices 1, 2 and 4-7 to meeting paper 3 for the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group 2 day workshop 2/3 October 2024 because these are publicly available information, which you can find at the following links:

- <https://www.ogtr.gov.au/resources/publications/dealings-classified-exempt-8-october-2019> (Appendix 1)
- <https://www.ogtr.gov.au/what-weve-approved/notifiable-low-risk-dealings-nlrds> (Appendix 2)
- <https://www.epa.govt.nz/database-search/hsno-application-register/view/APP202708> (Appendix 4)
- <https://www.epa.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Documents/New-Organisms/Website-lists/List-of-microbes-present-in-New-Zealand.pdf> (Appendix 5)
- <https://www.epa.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Documents/New-Organisms/Lists/EPA-List-of-Plants-26-June-2024-.pdf> (Appendix 6)

- <https://www.epa.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Documents/New-Organisms/Lists/EPA-List-of-animals-17-July-2024.pdf> (Appendix 7).

## Documents released

#	Date	Description	Information Withheld
1	April 2024	Meeting papers – Papers for Technical Advisory Group meeting 4 April 2024 (excerpts – topics 3 and 5)	
2	April 2024	Minutes - The second meeting of the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group - minutes (excerpts – topics 3 and 5)	9(2)(a) 9(2)(ba)(i)
3	April 2024	Meeting paper – First meeting of the Gene Technology Industry Focus Group	
4	April and June 2024	Minutes of Industry Focus Group meetings - excerpts	
5	May 2024	Meeting papers – Papers for Technical Advisory Group meeting 2 May 2024 (excerpts topics 2-4)	9(2)(f)(iv)
6	May 2024	Minutes – The second meeting of the Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group - minutes (excerpts on topics 2-4)	9(2)(a)
7	June 2024	Meeting papers: 5 June 2024 Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group (excerpt – paper 3)	9(2)(f)(iv)
8	June 2024	Minutes – Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group: 5 June 2024 (excerpt – paper 3)	9(2)(a) 9(2)(f)(iv)
9	June 2024	Meeting paper – Industry Focus Group June 2024	9(2)(f)(iv)
10	July 2024	Meeting papers: 4 July 2024 Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group (excerpts – papers 3-5)	
11	July 2024	Minutes Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group: 4 July 2024 (excerpts – papers 3-5)	9(2)(a) 9(2)(f)(iv)
12	July 2024	Summary of Māori Stakeholder Interviews	9(2)(ba)(i)
13	August 2024	Minutes: Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group meeting 1 August (excerpt – breakout group discussions)	9(2)(a) 9(2)(f)(iv)
14	September 2024	Meeting paper: Minutes Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group 12 September 2024 (excerpt – paper 2 and slide)	9(2)(f)(iv)

15	September 2024	Minutes: Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group meeting 12 September 2024 (excerpts re paper 2 and breakout discussion)	9(2)(a) 9(2)(f)(iv)
16	October 2024	Meeting papers: Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group 2 day workshop 2/3 October 2024 – papers 2, 3	9(2)(f)(iv)
17	October 2024	Meeting papers: Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group 2 day workshop 2/3 October 2024 – Appendix 3	
18	November 2024	Meeting papers: Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group 7 November 2024 (excerpt – item 2)	9(2)(f)(iv)
19	November 2024	Minutes: Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group meeting 7 November 2024 (excerpt items 2, 4 and 5) <i>(Note even though in the document the title is 'agenda' this is an error and the document is the meeting minutes, excerpted)</i>	9(2)(a)

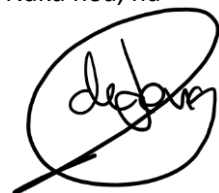
#### Documents withheld in full

#	Date	Description	Grounds
1	22 July 2024	Email about greater use of safe gene technologies	9(2)(a); 9(2)(ba)(i)
2	18 September 2024	AgResearch draft application to obtain approval for new organisms in containment for MBIE case study	9(2)(b)(ii); 9(2)(ba)(i)
3	December 2024	Meeting papers: Gene technology Technical Advisory Group 5 December 2024 (excerpt – paper 2)	9(2)(f)(iv)
4	December 2024	Minutes: Gene Technology Technical Advisory Group meeting 5 December 2024 (excerpt - paper 2)	9(2)(f)(iv)

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request or this response, or if you require any further assistance, please contact [OIA@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:OIA@mbie.govt.nz).

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Tony de Jong  
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Labour, Science and Enterprise, MBIE