



19-E-0546/DocCM 6055592

s9(2)(a)

5 Sep 2019

Dear s9(2)(a)

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Minister of Conservation dated 31 July 2019. You requested the following:

How many people have signed statements of objection to your plans to poison the water, soil and animals including native birds, in Raukumara, East Cape? These statements of objection have been sent to department of conservation some months ago. I'd like to know if they all reached you and if you plan to consult with these people further about how you plan to stop dead rotting animals bodies floating downstream and polluting their water supplies and poisoning their dogs etc?

There have been no official objection statements in relation to any Raukumara operations received by the Minister. The Minister wishes you to know that if she had received any official objection statements, they would have been forwarded to the Department, as this is an operational matter.

In answering your request, we first note that your letter appears to be under a significant misapprehension. For the absolute avoidance of doubt, we wish to make it clear that the Department has not applied toxins in the Raukumara area. For any future pest control operations, the Department will carry out consultation in accordance with relevant Standard Operating Procedures.

On March 8 2019, the Department of Conservation office at Opotiki received sheets containing 263 individual signatures. These were sent through the office's PO Box with no covering letter or contact information from an organizer. For this reason, and because the Department is not planning any immediate operations in the area, no action was taken in response.

Context to your request

We note that information previously provided by the Department under the Official Information Act 1982 has subsequently been edited and republished on various media and social media platforms. This has been conducted in a manner that misrepresents scientific evidence and facts provided by the Department. In addition, we are conscious that information released by the Department has been used by

others to misrepresent the work carried out by the Department to protect New Zealand's native species.

Bearing that in mind, we have decided to provide the following contextual information as it may assist your understanding of some of the issues you have raised in your request. This contextual information is also provided for the benefit of the general public.

1080 in water

Over 60 years of evidence has shown that 1080 does not accumulate in water, soil or animals. 1080 is highly soluble so it leaches to unmeasurable and insignificant concentrations in water very quickly. It is also biodegradable. It can be metabolised by various micro-organisms that live in water and soil, which break it down into harmless elements. Either way, it does not accumulate in water supplies. Bait deposited in water results in extremely low concentrations of 1080 and organisms can metabolise and/or excrete the substance over a short period after exposure.

Public health offices have been testing drinking water supplies after 1080 operations for 28 years but have not found contamination. It has never been found in the National Survey of Pesticides in Groundwater, which have been carried out every four years since 1990.

www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of-control/1080/using-1080-safely/1080-and-streams-rivers-and-lakes/

www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of-control/1080/using-1080-safely/1080-and-tap-water/

Management of dogs

Results of monitoring have found that carcasses of animals poisoned by 1080 are not likely to wash into waterways unless there was unusually heavy rainfall, and at such times there would be enough water present to dilute any contamination.

The main risk to dogs is from owners ignoring Department warning signs and allowing their dogs to roam in areas where pesticides have been applied before the caution period is over.

In 2018 there have been only two reports of dog poisoning (neither related to DOC operations). In one, the owner had not followed warning signs that dogs should be kept on leads, in the other, an alleged poisoning had occurred when the dog had been in an area that was closed to the public.

Since 2007, reports on every aerial 1080 operation undertaken in New Zealand have been made publicly available on the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)

website: www.epa.govt.nz/resources-and-publications/1080-aerial-operators-reports/?tag=&filter=204.

These reports show that improvements in planning and delivering 1080 operations are successful in helping owners protect their dogs from accidental poisoning. In the 9 years between 2007 and 2016, EPA reports show 34 dogs had died during aerial 1080 operations (an average of 3.7 per year).

This compares to 72 dogs confirmed dead during 1080 operations in the 7 years between 1986 and 1992 ¹, and 254 dogs confirmed as being poisoned in the 17 years between 1960 and 1976 ².

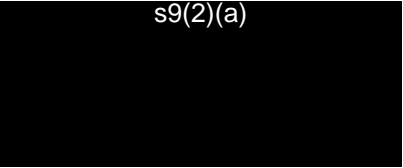
There are many measures that the Department takes to inform owners and protect dogs from the risk of poisoning. These include calculating buffer zones to avoid the risk of poisoned possums wandering from application areas, clearing carcasses from tracks, advising landowners and stakeholders to make sure their dogs are well fed and therefore not likely to scavenge, and supplying muzzles for working dogs if they are requested.

These measures are integral to the public consultations before any aerial 1080 operation takes place, including at Raukumara, should an operation take place in that location.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) will be published on the Department's website.

Yours sincerely,

s9(2)(a)



Amber Bill
Director, Threats, Biodiversity Group
for Director-General

¹ Orr M & Bentley G. 1994. Accidental 1080 poisonings in livestock and companion animals. *Surveillance*. 21(1):27-28.

² Rammell CG & Fleming PA. 1978. Compound 1080 : properties and uses of sodium monofluoroacetate in New Zealand. Wellington: Animal Health Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.