



7 August 2025

Whare Kaupapa Atawhai/
Conservation House 18
Manners Street Te Aro,
Wellington
6011
doc.govt.nz
Ref: OIAD-5445

Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 11 July 2025, in which you asked a range of questions relating to the Department of Conservation's safety assessments for aerial 1080 operations, specifically concerning the marine environment contamination pathway.

I understand you believe there is a significant gap in 1080 safety assessments, based on an unrecognised risk of groundwater contamination, and have referred to Dr. Alastair Suren's research (NIWA, 2018) as evidence for this.

You appear to be mistaken regarding Dr Suren's findings. The results from Dr Suren's research report "Tracking 1080 (sodium fluoroacetate) in surface and subsurface flows during a rainfall event: a hillslope-scale field study", published in the Australasian Journal of Water Resources in March 2018, were that "the potential for 1080 to contaminate receiving waters (including soil, ground and surface water) under normal operational conditions is considered insignificant". Dr Suren also found that "Even as a large proportion of rainfall infiltrated into the soil, likely carrying dissolved 1080 with it, no groundwater contamination was detected".

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA).

Regarding the Department of Conservation's safety assessments for aerial 1080 operations, an assessment of environmental effects is completed for every 1080 operation that occurs on public conservation lands. This assessment includes ensuring the toxin application is compliant with all current regulations controlling 1080 use, in line with current scientific knowledge. A summary of the current research regarding 1080 and its fate in the environment is maintained by the Department in its "Sodium fluoroacetate Pesticide Information Review". Section 2 "Fate in the Environment" is particularly relevant to your questions. I have attached a copy for your reference.

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	9 September 2024	Sodium Fluoroacetate (1080) Pesticide Information Review	Released in part

I have decided to release the relevant parts of the documents listed above, subject to information being withheld under one or more of the following sections of the OIA, as applicable:

- preventing undue pressure on officials, under section 9(2)(g)(ii) – to protect Ministers, officials, or employees from improper pressure or harassment.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the OIA and determined there are no public interests that outweigh the grounds for withholding.

Please find additional relevant information on DOC's website with regard to 1080 and aquatic life at [1080 research and references](#).

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) may be published on DOC's website.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Ben Reddiex".

Ben Reddiex
Director National Programmes
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai