OIR: 2627/20

12 August 2026

[redacted]

Tēnā kōrua [redacted],

Request for Information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) (the LGOIMA)

Thank you for your email of **22 July 2026** requesting the following information:

We are writing as long-time local ratepayers to ask about the climate scenarios Kapiti Coast District Council is using to guide its planning, infrastructure, and investment decisions, particularly "coastal retreat" policies.

We understand that the Minister for Climate Change, Simon Watts, has recently written to councils expressing concern about the continued use of RCP8.5 and other extreme emissions scenarios. Our understanding is that these scenarios are no longer regarded as the most realistic basis for long-term planning and have been retired from the latest international climate modelling framework.

We're concerned that relying on these worst-case assumptions are contributing to higher infrastructure costs, increased restrictions on development and housing, uncertainty around insurances and ultimately higher rates and greater debt for communities.

Could you please advise whether the Council intends to review its current approach and, if so, when it expects to replace these assumptions with planning based on more realistic, evidence-based scenarios?

Thank you for sharing your concerns around Council's use of the worst-case assumptions related to climate change. I can confirm that the Minister for Climate Change, Simon Watts, has written to councils expressing concern about the continued use of RCP8.5 and other extreme emissions scenarios.

However, the Ministry responsible for setting the guidance and national direction for coastal hazard assessments (previously the Ministry for the Environment and now the

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Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport) has not yet updated its guidance or requirements on the basis of the Ministers advice.

As background, I can confirm that Council has previously undertaken coastal hazard assessments that met guidance and requirements set by the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) as at the time the work was undertaken. Of note:

- This includes the most recent MfE guidance (Coastal Hazards and Climate Change Guidance (2024)) which continues to recommend the use of a range of climate scenarios.
- The scenarios recommended by the MfE guidance are: SSP2-4.5 and SSP5-8.5 (Shared Socio-economic Pathway) and RCP2.6-RCP8.5 (Representative Concentration Pathway).
- The guidance emphasises consideration of multiple plausible futures rather than relying on one single projection. However, the guidance also specifically recommends the use of SSP5-8.5 for identifying areas potentially affected by coastal hazards.

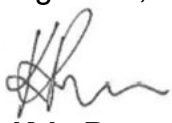
Council is considering where and how updated advice from the IPCC will be factored into our work alongside the recently completed review of coastal hazard science. As you will be aware, the Local Government Act 2002 requires that we continue to consider legislation, national policy, guidance and the best available information when undertaking coastal hazard and planning work.

We therefore look forward to the Minister, or Minister for MCERT, directing their agencies to update requirements and guidance on these matters in due course. However, we can confirm that we have not had any advice on when this may occur.

Given your points about the implications of climate scenarios for planning and investment decisions for infrastructure and other matters, I can also confirm that we will be providing advice to our Councillors in the next few months on these matters, and as we propose next steps for the coastal plan change.

For completeness and clarity, I note that Kapiti Coast District does not have any policies in place requiring “coastal retreat”.

Ngā mihi,



Kris Pervan
Group Manager Strategy and Growth
Te Kaihautū Rautaki me te Tupu

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