

Leana Hosea
By e-mail

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20th February 2024

Ref: EIR2023/19790

Dear Leana Hosea,

Environmental Information Regulations 2004

Thank you for your enquiry of 27 November 2024, which we have considered under the terms of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the EIRs).

You asked for the following information:

"We would like to submit an EIR to the Treasury on the topic of use, pollution, regulation, and restriction of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), including F2 or fluorine gases, such as HFC's.

- all documents related to physical, telephone or video communications and meetings (including diary entries, notes, minutes, correspondence produced before and after the communications and meetings) between the Treasury (including the Chancellor of the Exchequer, ministers, under secretaries, and senior officials) and the organisations listed below since January 2023 to the present date:

Major companies:

AGC

F2

Koura

Dupont

3M

Chemours

Honeywell

Solvay

National trade associations

Chemical Industries Association

British Coatings Federation

European Fluorocarbons Technical Committee / Cefic Sector Group

Plastics Europe

FluoroCouncil

Chemical Business Association

Fire Industry Association"

We have considered your request under both the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the EIRs) and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOI Act), on the basis that the information in scope of your request includes information which falls within the definition of 'environmental information' as stated in the EIRs, as well as information which does not fall within this definition.

Following a search of our records, we can confirm that HM Treasury does hold information in scope of your request.

We can confirm HM Treasury Ministers did not hold meetings with the companies or trade associations listed above. There is therefore no ministerial correspondence relating to physical, telephone or virtual meetings.

Your request also asked for any senior officials' meetings or correspondence with the companies listed above. We have identified some information within scope.

HM Treasury senior officials met with 3M on 1 February 2023 as part of a Whitehall & Industry Group roundtable on Growth and Productivity. HM Treasury holds a readout of this meeting (attached as annex a).

HM Treasury senior officials also met with the Chemical Industries Association on 6 April 2023 as part of an overview session on the consultation on addressing carbon leakage risk to support decarbonisation. This meeting was recorded as an audio-visual file, however we are unable to provide this file in its original form as it contains personal information which we cannot easily redact. Therefore, we have shared a transcript of the meeting (annex b) and the presentation delivered at the meeting (annex c) under regulation 6(1)(a) of the EIRs.

Environmental information

Regulation 13 – personal data

We consider that some of the information within scope of your request engages the exemption provided for at regulation 13 of the EIRs as it constitutes personal data. Regulation 13 exempts personal information from disclosure if its release would contravene one of the Data Protection principles. The first data protection principle requires the disclosure of third-party personal data to be lawful, fair and transparent. We believe that releasing the information would breach the first data protection principle. Therefore, this information has been withheld on reliance of regulation 13.

Non-environmental information

Section 41

We consider the information in scope engages section 41(1) of the FOI Act, which relates to information provided in confidence. Section 41(1) provides that information is exempt if disclosure of the information to the public (otherwise than under this Act) by the public authority holding it would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that or any other person. This is an absolute exemption which does not require us to consider the public interest balance in disclosure.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us. Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights Unit