

12 October 2026

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Personal details removed for proactive release

OIA 31221

Thank you for your email of 14 September 2026, in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

Please provide all cabinet papers, minutes, submissions, briefings, aides memoire, and other relevant documents re NZ-US critical minerals engagements since February 2026

Response to your request

Please find enclosed the Aide Memoire Cabinet paper titled, *Further advice on critical minerals and next steps*, dated 30 March 2026. Some information is withheld under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis; and
- 9(2)(g)(i): to protect the free and frank expression of opinions by departments.

Part of your request is refused under section 18(d) of the OIA, as the information in scope is publicly available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (the Ministry) website: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/media-and-resources/critical-minerals-proactive-release-may-2026?m=187783#search:Y3JpdGljYWwgbWluZXJhbHM=>

The remaining information within scope of your request relates to an ongoing Cabinet process and is withheld in full under the following sections of the OIA:

- 6(a): to avoid prejudicing the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the New Zealand Government;
- 9(2)(f)(iv): to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials; and
- 9(2)(j): to avoid prejudice to negotiations.

Where the information has been withheld under section 9 of the OIA, no public interest in releasing the information has been identified that would override the reasons for withholding it.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website:
www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Sarah Corbett
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Aide Memoire — Cabinet paper: Further advice on critical minerals and next steps

Context

- Minister for Resources will lead the Cabinet discussion of the paper: “Further advice on critical minerals and next steps” at the Cabinet Economic Policy Committee on Wednesday 1 April 2026. The talking points are provided in Annex One below.
- Agencies have an agreed joint communications plan to support the Minister for Resources as the lead Minister in answering questions relating to critical minerals, and to support the Minister of Foreign Affairs in his responsibility for international relations.

Recent Updates

- The US State Department and the Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) are both motivated to action by US concerns about US dependence on China-sourced critical minerals and rare earths products ^{s6(a), s6(b)(i)}
- The bilateral Framework is a State Department initiative. The Agreement on Trade in Critical Minerals (ATCM) is a USTR initiative.
- ^{s6(a), s6(b)(i)}
- We understand that USTR has agreed ‘Action Plans’ with Mexico and Japan that include substantive language on price mechanisms including price floors. ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}
- Price floors or other price mechanisms could have policy and fiscal implications for New Zealand and could impact our ability to engage on the ATCM.

Next steps

- Further information may become available before Cabinet meets. ^{s6(a), s6(b)(i)}
We will update accordingly.

Economics and Americas Divisions
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
30 March 2026

Annex One: Talking points for Cabinet paper – Further advice on critical minerals and next steps

s9(2)(g)(i) - 1 page withheld

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

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