

Hon Damien O'Connor



MP for West Coast-Tasman

Minister of Agriculture

Minister for Biosecurity

Minister for Food Safety

Minister for Rural Communities

Minister of State for Trade and Export Growth

MIN18-1195

5 SEP 2018

Michael J Barton
Coordinator
Western Sahara Campaign-NZ
7 Montague Street
Alicetown
LOWER HUTT 5010
westernsaharacampaignnz@gmail.com

Dear Michael

Thank you for your correspondence of 30 July 2018 regarding the importation of Western Sahara phosphate rock.

I have brought the issues surrounding the importation of Western Sahara phosphate rock that you have raised to the attention of officials within the Ministry for Primary Industries.

I am advised that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has consistently made clear to those companies importing phosphate rock from Western Sahara that they must comply with international law, and that they import the product under their own responsibility.

In considering the questions you have raised about the views of rural communities, I would note the provenance of phosphate rock imports is already publicly available. The information is also listed on one of the fertiliser company websites.

Regarding the Primary Sector Council, it is my expectation that it will consider those questions pertinent to the primary industries to realise greater value from the sector; however, it is not appropriate for me to direct the Primary Sector Council in its work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'D' followed by a horizontal line and a smaller, circular flourish.

Hon Damien O'Connor
Minister of Agriculture
Minister for Rural Communities