



19th September 2025
Save Leitrim
saveleitrim@gmail.com

Re: AIE Request 25 319

Dear Save Leitrim Group,

I refer to the request you made on 20th August 2025, under the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 to 2018 (S.I. No. 133 of 2007, S.I. No. 662 of 2011, S.I. 615 of 2014 and S.I. No. 309 of 2018) (hereafter referred to as the AIE Regulations), for access to information held by this the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM).

Your AIE Request

We wish to receive under the AIE Regulations, in electronic format;

1) A copy of the Forestry Licensing Plan for 2025.

2) If no Plan has been published we are seeking all information relating to the consideration of producing and publishing such a Plan.

Summary of Decision

I have decided on your AIE request on **19th September 2025**. My decision is to part grant your request.

The basis for my decision is that:

I have identified no records held by the Department in relation to item 1 your request.

I have identified seventeen (17) records held by the Department in relation to item 2 of your request:

- One (1) of which I grant in full.
- Eight (8) of which are part granted, with redactions.
- Eight (8) of which I refuse.

Where information has been refused or partially refused, the following article(s) of SI 133/2007 apply:

7(5) *Where a request is made to a public authority and the information requested is not held by or for the authority concerned, that authority shall inform the applicant as soon as possible that the information is not held by or for it.*

9(2) *A public authority may refuse to make environmental information available where the request-*



- (c) *concerns material in the course of completion, or unfinished documents or data.*
- 9(2) *A public authority may refuse to make environmental information available where the request concerns-*
- (d) *internal communications of public authorities, taking into account the public interest served by the disclosure.*

Searches Conducted

Following the assignment of this AIE request to me, the following searches were undertaken:

- (i) A searching email was sent to the HEO in Forest Policy Unit and Subject Matter expert for Forest Policy. A response was received from the SME to advise that they were not involved, however, they advised of another SME responsible.
- (ii) A searching email was sent to the AP for Felling, Forestry Support Unit and Alleged Illegal Forestry and Subject Matter expert for Felling and Forestry Support, as well as leading the document draft. The SME completed a search in the Department's eDocs shared drive in *2025 Licencing Plan* folder for records relevant to your request. Ten (10) records were identified in the folder, of which seven (7) were identified as relevant to your request.
- (iii) A searching email was sent to the AP for AIE Unit, and Subject Matter expert due to their previous position held in Forestry Approvals and contributor to the plan. The SME completed a search in their email inbox for records relevant to your request using the following keywords:
- *Forestry Licencing Plan 2025*
 - *Forestry Licencing Plan 2025 DRAFT (Input required)*
- One (1) record was identified as relevant to your request.
- (iv) A searching email was sent to the AP for Forestry Approvals and Subject Matter Expert for Forestry Approvals. The SME completed a search in their email inbox and own drive for records relevant to your request using the following keywords:
- *Forestry Licencing Plan 2025*
 - *Forestry Licencing Plan 2025 DRAFT (Input required)*
- Nine (9) emails were identified as relevant to your request of which two (2) contained one (1) attachment each, totalling eleven (11) records. Two (2) were duplicate threads and removed which leaves a total of nine (9) records.

Public Interest Test

In accordance with article 10(3) and 10(4), I have weighed the public interest served by disclosure against the interest served by part refusal of your request. The factors in favour of release of this information are the making available to the public, where practical and allowed under the law, in a transparent manner, information affecting the environment.

I have given consideration that there is a public interest in ensuring transparency and access to environmental information, including a public interest in providing access to information which contributes to a greater understanding of the Department's environmental decision-making processes and functions, however, releasing comments and internal deliberations on possible



changes to the public may inhibit future internal feedback on essential documents thus preventing detailed discussions, which in turn would reduce or prevent the provision of a quality service to the public. I have determined that the public interest would not be served by disclosing the redacted information/information you request. Furthermore, when applying article 10(4) of the AIE regulations I gave consideration to the emails provided for by the Subject Matter Experts and made redactions on a restrictive basis to remove only comments that applied to internal discussions on changes and recommendations to the draft document which apply under article 9(2)(d).

The factors in favour of withholding are that a private thinking space is required for ongoing discussions, deliberations including comments and recommendations within email correspondence and unfinished document drafts.

Please note that in making my decision, I have considered article 10(5), which states that,

Nothing in articles 8 or 9 shall authorise a public authority not to make available environmental information which, although held with information to which article 8 or 9 relates, may be separated from such information.

I gave consideration to the redactions made under article 9(2)(d) and I have released all other separated information contained within those records after giving consideration to article 10(5) of the AIE regulations.

Under article 10(6), where a request is refused pursuant to article 9(2)(c), because it concerns material in the course of completion, the public authority shall inform the applicant of the name of the authority preparing the material and the estimated time needed for completion. In this case, the name of the authority is the Forest Service, DAFM and the aforementioned material is due to be completed by 31st October 2025.

Schedule of Records

Please see schedule of records for information on records released. This lists the records that I consider relevant to your request. It provides a brief description of each record and the decision I have made on each record. Where I have decided to refuse or partially refuse access to a record, it specifies the article of the AIE Regulations under which this refusal has been made.

Fees

In this instance the Department will not be applying a fee for this AIE because search, retrieval and compilation of records took less than the chargeable time.

Right of Review

Under article 11 of the AIE Regulations, you have a right to request an internal review of this decision. An internal review involves a complete reconsideration of the matter by a member of the staff of this Department, unconnected with the original decision, of the same or higher rank than the original decision-maker, who may affirm, vary or annul the original decision.



If you wish to request an internal review, you can do so by emailing FOI Unit at freedomofinformation@agriculture.gov.ie referring to this decision, quoting the AIE reference number. This request must be made within one month of the date of receipt of this decision. The decision of an internal review will be communicated to you within one month of receipt of your request for an internal review.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan Kelly

Brendan Kelly

AIE Unit

Forestry Division

Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine

Johnstown Castle Estate

County Wexford