

Public Interest Test –EIR

Reference Number – DAERA/26-676

Requested Information

How many pollution incidents have occurred in or around Lough Neagh or its major tributaries in the past 3 years?

a. Please include the full pollution incident report for each.

Exemption / Exception under consideration

Regulation 12(4)(b) - request for information is manifestly unreasonable

Reasons why the public interest would favour disclosure:

- Access to official information can improve public confidence and trust and Departments have a duty to operate transparently.
- Regulation 12(2) requires that when a public authority considers refusing a request for environmental information it must apply a presumption in favour of disclosure.

Reasons why the public interest would favour withholding:

- The volume of information requested would place a burden on staff resources, beyond what is available.
- Staff time would be diverted from performing other essential public tasks and thus having a negative impact on public services.

Conclusion

Following consideration of the Public Interest Test the Department has decided that on balance, the public interest in maintaining the exemption does outweigh the public interest in disclosing all the available information. The Department has prioritised information that it can provide, and this is included in the reply.

[REDACTED]

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Water Pollution Regulation and Enforcement Team