



**James Shaw**  
Green Party MP



**Green**  
Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand

28 November 2014

Office of the Chief Archivist  
PO Box 12-050  
Wellington  
New Zealand

Dear Ms Little,

I wish to draw your attention to the matters raised in the media recently with regards to the keeping of public records by the Prime Minister and his department.

On 27 November, Steven Joyce, in replying for the Prime Minister during question time, told Parliament that the Prime Minister "definitely deletes all his text messages". In subsequent questions, Mr Joyce stated the nature of the discussion meant that John Key was acting as the Prime Minister, rather than the leader of the National Party, when replying to texts message.

Under such circumstances, we believe these text messages are a public record as defined by s4 of the Public Records Act 2005 ("the Act"). Therefore, there is a duty to maintain these text messages under s17 of the Act. Disposal of these texts messages is contrary to s18 of the Act. As such, we believe there might have been an offence committed under s61 of the Act.

In light of these circumstances, we ask you to investigate the matter under s29 of the Act.

Further, we ask the Chief Archivist to provide direction and guidelines relating to circumstances in which text messages can be deleted and in what circumstances they must be maintained.

We ask this issue be addressed with urgency given that a number of messages have already been deleted and it is in the public interest for public offices to maintain public records.

Queries may be directed to my staff, either Andrew Campbell (04) 817-6793 or Nirupa George (04) 817-6767.

Yours sincerely,

James Shaw  
Green Party MP

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