



BRIEFING

Public communications in Phase 2 of the Fuel Response Plan

Date:	19 May 2026	Priority:	High
Security classification:	Sensitive	Tracking number:	BRIEFING-REQ-0032802

	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Nicola Willis Minister of Finance	Agree that the components of public messaging in Phase 2 are: - Ministerial messaging supported by MBIE; - Targeted stakeholder engagement led by MBIE; and - A public campaign operated by EECA and funded out of EECA's baselines, with Ministers providing guidance and having oversight on the key messaging. Agree that the purpose of the Phase 2 EECA campaign is to provide fuel-saving advice focused on conservation and with stronger messaging than the Phase 1 campaign. Agree to EECA spending the money (up to \$300,000) needed to undertake preparatory work and pre-produce assets so that campaign can go live within around 3 days of a Ministerial decision to shift to Phase 2.	20 May 2026
Hon David Seymour Associate Minister of Finance		
Hon Chris Bishop Associate Minister of Finance		
Hon Simeon Brown Minister for Energy		
Hon Shane Jones Associate Minister for Energy		

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Andrew Craig	General Manager, Fuel Response Plan	Privacy of natural persons	✓

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

The Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority have been consulted.

Minister’s office to complete:

- ☐ Approved
- ☐ Noted
- ☐ Seen
- ☐ See Minister’s Notes
- ☐ Declined
- ☐ Needs change
- ☐ Overtaken by Events
- ☐ Withdrawn

Comments



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Purpose

To seek your direction on a preferred approach for public communications in Phase 2 of the Fuel Response Plan.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

a **Agree** that the components of public messaging in Phase 2 are:

- Ministerial messaging supported by MBIE;
- Targeted stakeholder engagement led by MBIE; and
- A public campaign operated by EECA and funded out of EECA's baselines, with Ministers providing guidance and having oversight on the key messaging.

Agree / Disagree

b **Agree** that the purpose of the Phase 2 EECA campaign is to provide fuel-saving advice focused on conservation and with stronger messaging than the Phase 1 campaign.

Agree / Disagree

c **Agree** to EECA spending the money (up to \$300,000) needed to undertake preparatory work and pre-produce assets so that campaign can go live within around 3 days of a Ministerial decision to shift to Phase 2.

Agree / Disagree

Privacy of natural persons

Andrew Craig

General Manager, Fuel Response Plan

Fuel Response, MBIE

19 / 05 / 2026

Hon Nicola Willis

Minister of Finance

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Hon David Seymour
Associate Minister of Finance
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Hon Chris Bishop
Associate Minister of Finance
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Hon Simeon Brown
Minister for Energy
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Hon Shane Jones
Associate Minister for Energy
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Background

1. On 25 March, the Ministerial Economic Security and Supply Chains Group (the Oversight Group) asked the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority (EECA) to begin working on a public information campaign funded from its baselines. The Phase 1 campaign was launched three days later with practical actions people and businesses could take to improve fuel efficiency.
2. On 30 April, the Minister for Energy requested MBIE to provide further options on EECA's Phase 1 campaign (0032411 refers, provided on 8 May). The Minister for Energy also requested advice (i.e. this briefing) on options for the Phase 2 campaign.
3. The purpose of the briefing is to:
 - Ask that Ministers confirm the purpose of the Phase 2 campaign, and the roles of EECA and MBIE;
 - Note high-level advice on the Phase 2 campaign; and
 - Ask that Ministers allow EECA to spend the money needed to undertake preparatory work and pre-produce assets, so that campaign can go live as soon as possible in the event of a shift to Phase 2.

Confirming the purpose of the Phase 2 campaign

4. Under Phase 2, the market continues to operate effectively, and fuel remains available nationwide. However, it is expected that there will be signs of potential short-term supply disruption.
5. Phase 2 will have a focus on supporting voluntary demand reduction while markets continue to function. It is intended for price signals to be the main driver of suppressing fuel demand.
6. Phases in the Fuel Response Plan have been designed to enable different types of fuels to move up and down Phases, depending on the specific shortage impacting each fuel. This is because the degree to which price suppresses fuel demand may be uneven across different users; for example, demand of diesel fuel is anticipated to be more inelastic than that of petrol. Therefore, the public communications will be tailored to take the above into account.
7. Ministers will guide the development of (and have oversight over) messaging about the fuel response and managing public confidence, while EECA would deliver the public information campaign providing fuel-saving guidance. People and businesses will be pointed to, and encouraged to use, EECA's practical tips to save fuel.

The Phase 2 campaign builds on the existing Phase 1 campaign with stronger messaging and a focus on fuel conservation

8. A Phase 2 campaign will build on the existing Phase 1 campaign i.e. practical fuel saving advice to help people and businesses navigate higher fuel prices, as well as saving fuel for New Zealand to avoid needing to escalate phases.

9. The current Phase 1 campaign would be evolved with an updated look and feel as well as additional and stronger messaging to signal a greater need for fuel conservation, while providing practical fuel-saving advice. The Phase 2 campaign will also establish the “Help Our Fuel Go Further” concept which will work at higher Phases, should there be further escalations.
10. Draft messaging for the Phase 2 campaign, targeted towards households and businesses, is attached in **Annex One** and **Two** respectively.
11. The campaign can be tailored to the specific circumstances of Phase 2 and the nature of specific fuel disruption. For example, targeted campaigns can be developed for diesel users if there is a disruption that only impacted diesel.
12. The high-level differences between messaging in Phases 1 and 2 is summarised as follows:

Phase 1 messaging	Phase 2 messaging
Focused primarily on fuel efficiency and reducing individual cost impacts while supply remains largely stable.	Consider reducing unnecessary fuel use altogether due to supply disruptions.
Encouraging pure efficiency behaviours (e.g. tire pressure, efficient driving)	Encouraging behaviours that actively reduce fuel demand (e.g. public transport, reducing trips, carpooling)
Reducing financial burden of high fuel prices (“Doing these actions saves you money”)	Reducing financial burden of high fuel prices AND the collectively reducing pressures on supply (“Doing these actions saves you money AND helps New Zealand”)

High-level advice on the Phase 2 campaign

13. Based on existing experiences delivering the Phase 1 campaign, EECA estimates that a high intensity, broad-reach campaign (80 percent¹ campaign recall after four weeks) will cost around \$2.7 million for a four-week campaign (or around \$3.3 million for a five-week campaign).²
14. A high intensity campaign is needed given the short duration of Phase 2, with stronger messaging to signal the need for fuel conservation, alongside the practical fuel-saving advice continuing from the Phase 1 campaign.
15. Key costs include:
 - Up to \$300,000 to produce assets and other collateral (e.g. different versions of ads for various channels). This compares to \$340,000 under Phase 1.

¹ This compares to 70 per cent campaign recall (i.e. per cent of New Zealanders that recall seeing the campaign) achieved after four weeks for the Phase 1 campaign.

² Initial estimates for the Phase 2 campaign ran from \$3.375 million to \$4.875 million over six weeks. The current \$2.7 million to \$3.2 million estimate included in this briefing has been designed to better account for the likely duration of Phase 2 and should represent better cost-effectiveness.

- Approximately \$50,000 campaign performance monitoring (surveying drivers through an independent research firm) over four to five weeks. This compares to \$75,000 in Phase 1.
 - \$600,000 per week, for four to five weeks. This is the same weekly cost as the first three weeks of the Phase 1 campaign.
16. All costs for the Phase 1 and Phase 2 campaigns will be funded from EECA's baselines. Should a Phase 2 campaign go ahead, EECA will need direction from the Minister for Energy on how its existing work programme will be re-prioritised.
 17. To be ready to go, EECA needs Ministerial approval to spend up to \$300,000 on planning and designing assets for a campaign. The collateral for the campaign will be ready in around 14 days from the point of Ministerial agreement to this briefing. This spending will enable the Phase 2 campaign to go live within three days of a Ministerial decision on shift into Phase 2 being made.
 18. MBIE notes that this approach will also allow Ministers to make further choices about the costs, distribution channels, and duration of the campaign at the time when it is launched. These choices are best considered in conjunction with the specific disruption New Zealand may be facing (for example, a diesel-only shortage would require a more targeted campaign). Officials will provide you with advice on the best approach in light of the scenario at that time.
 19. The advice will have a focus on considering demonstrating value for money objectives, balancing the need to achieve broad reach with the public relatively quickly, while keeping spending (particularly on mass media such as radio and television) within Ministerial expectations.

Next steps

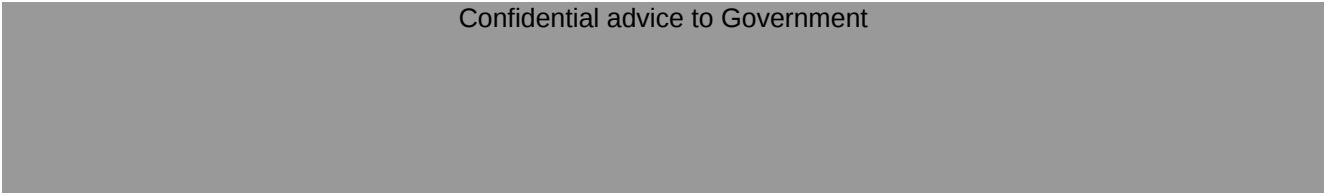
20. Following approval to proceed with preparatory planning, MBIE and EECA will work together on a campaign that can go live within three days of a Ministerial decision on shift into Phase 2 being made. The design would be presented to Ministers for final approval in the coming weeks.
21. Ministers will receive further policy advice in the coming weeks for public information campaigns for Phases 3 and 4.

Annexes

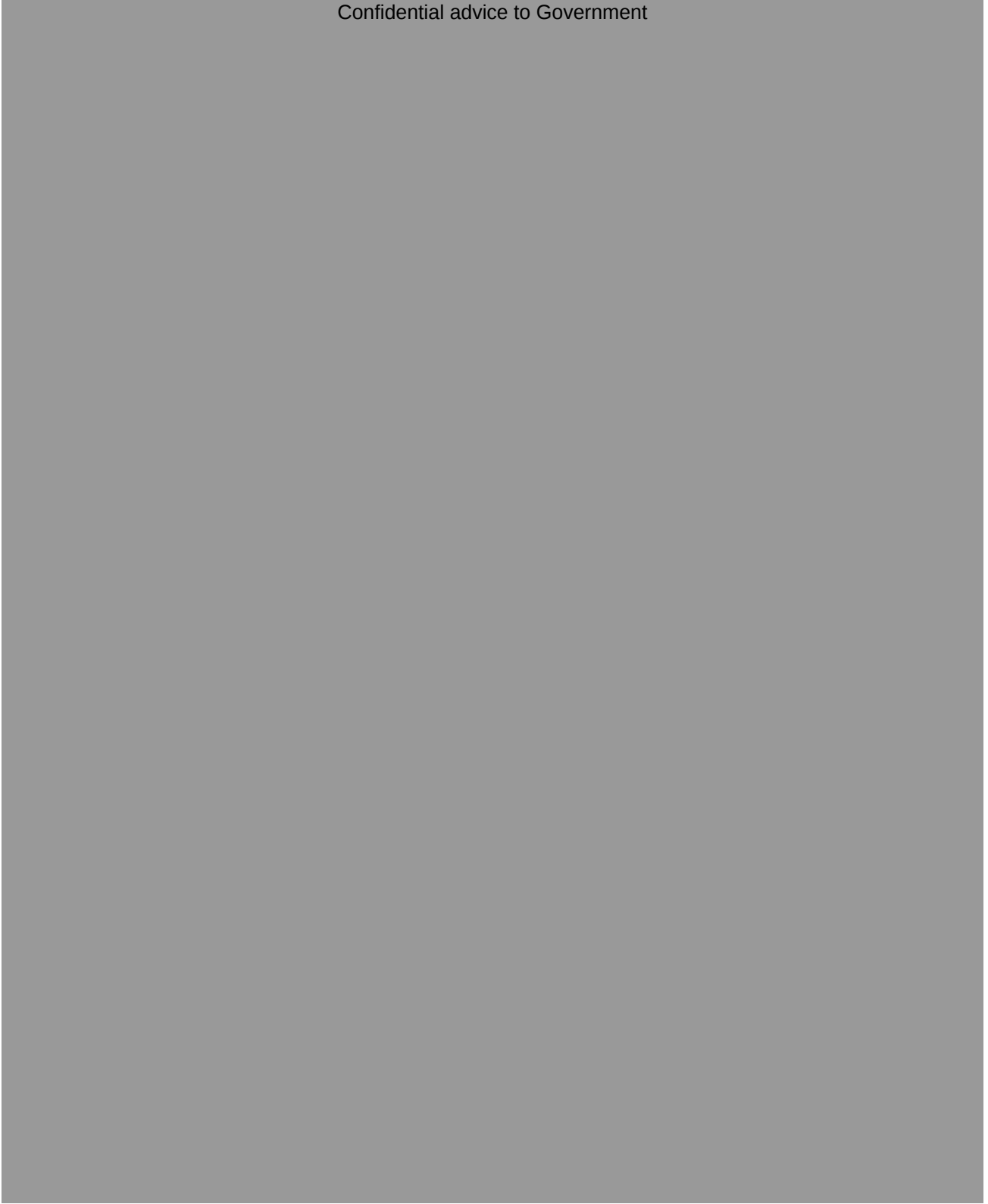
Annex one: Draft messaging for businesses

Annex two: Draft messaging for households

Confidential advice to Government



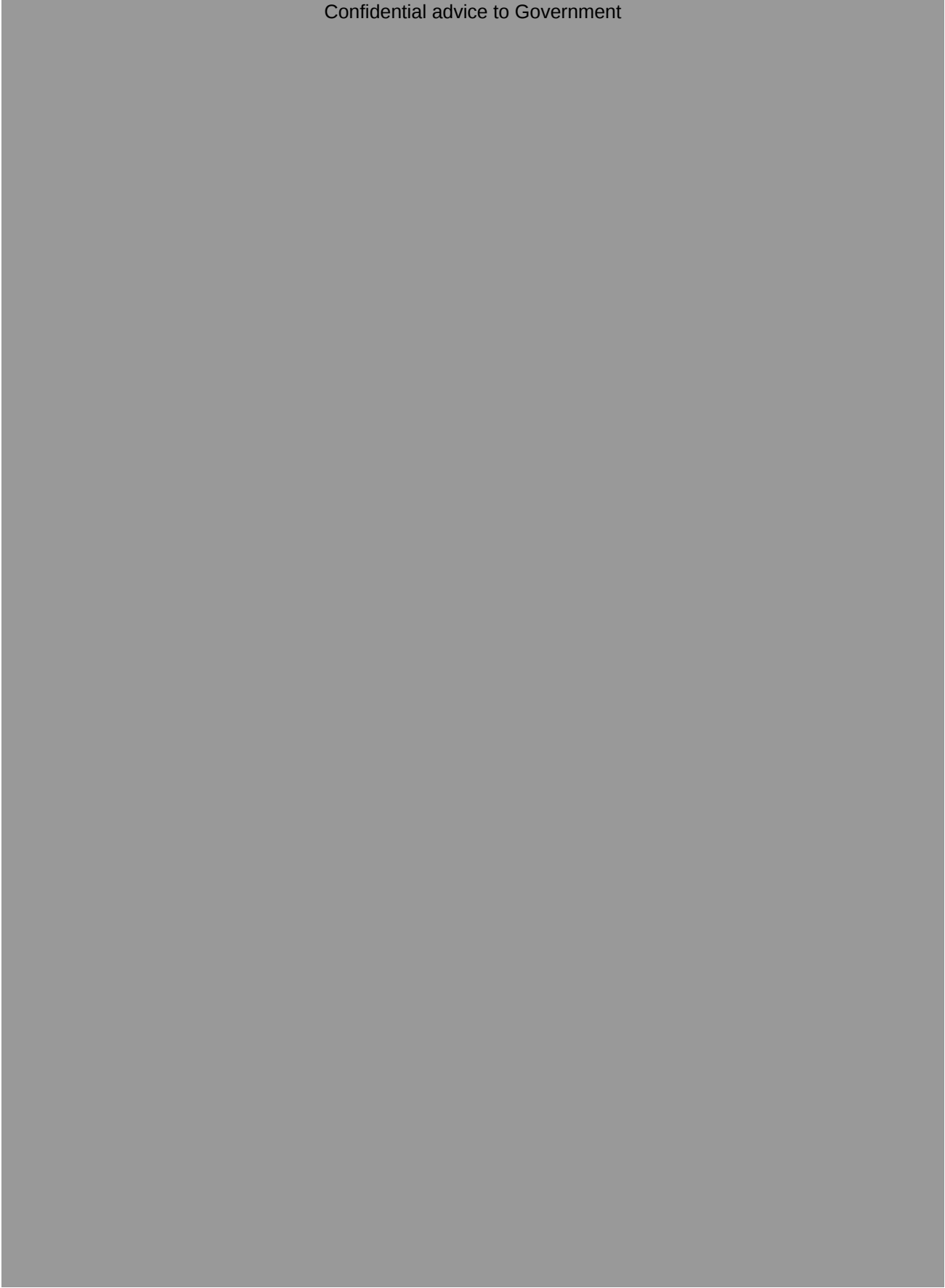
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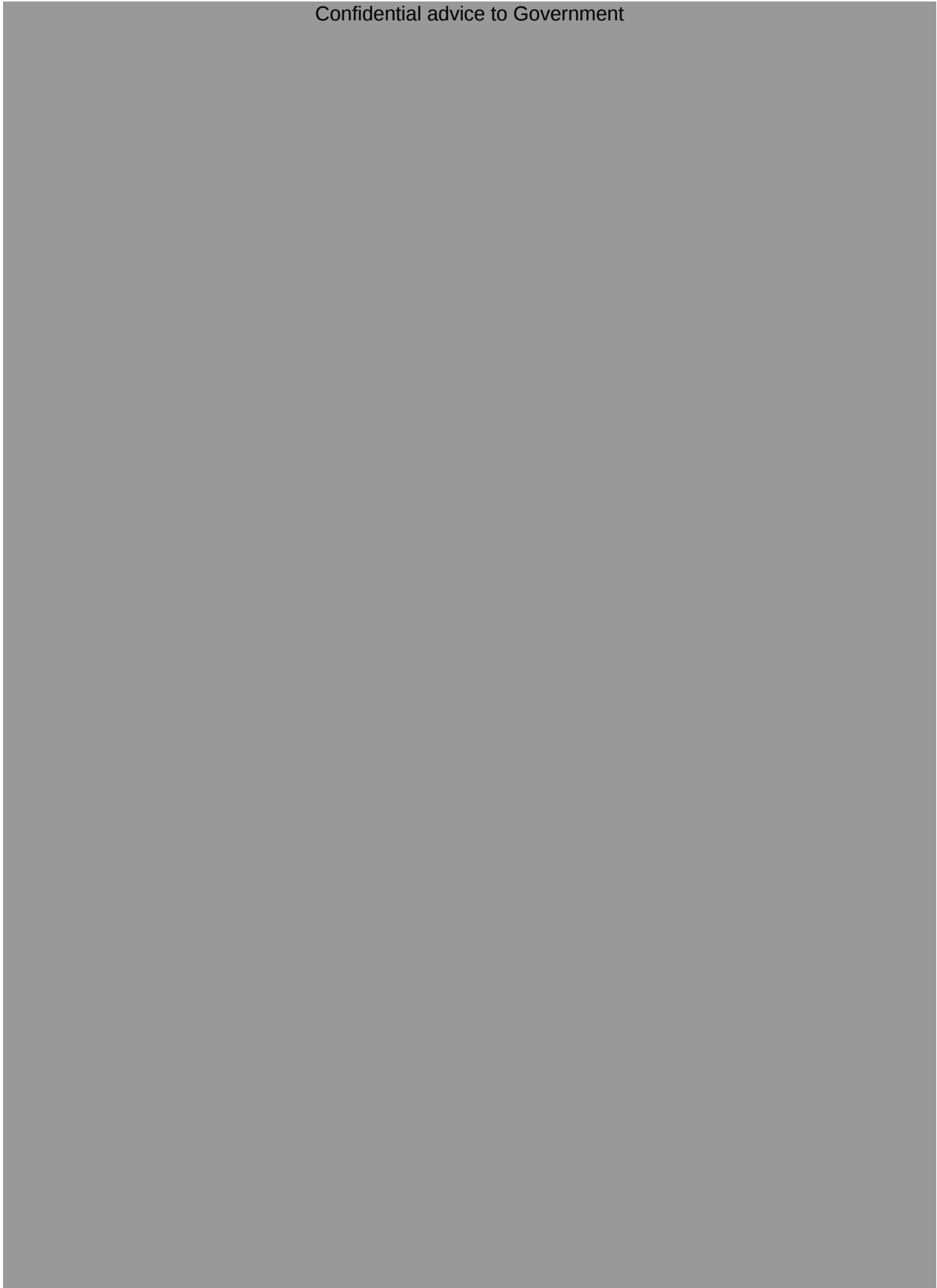
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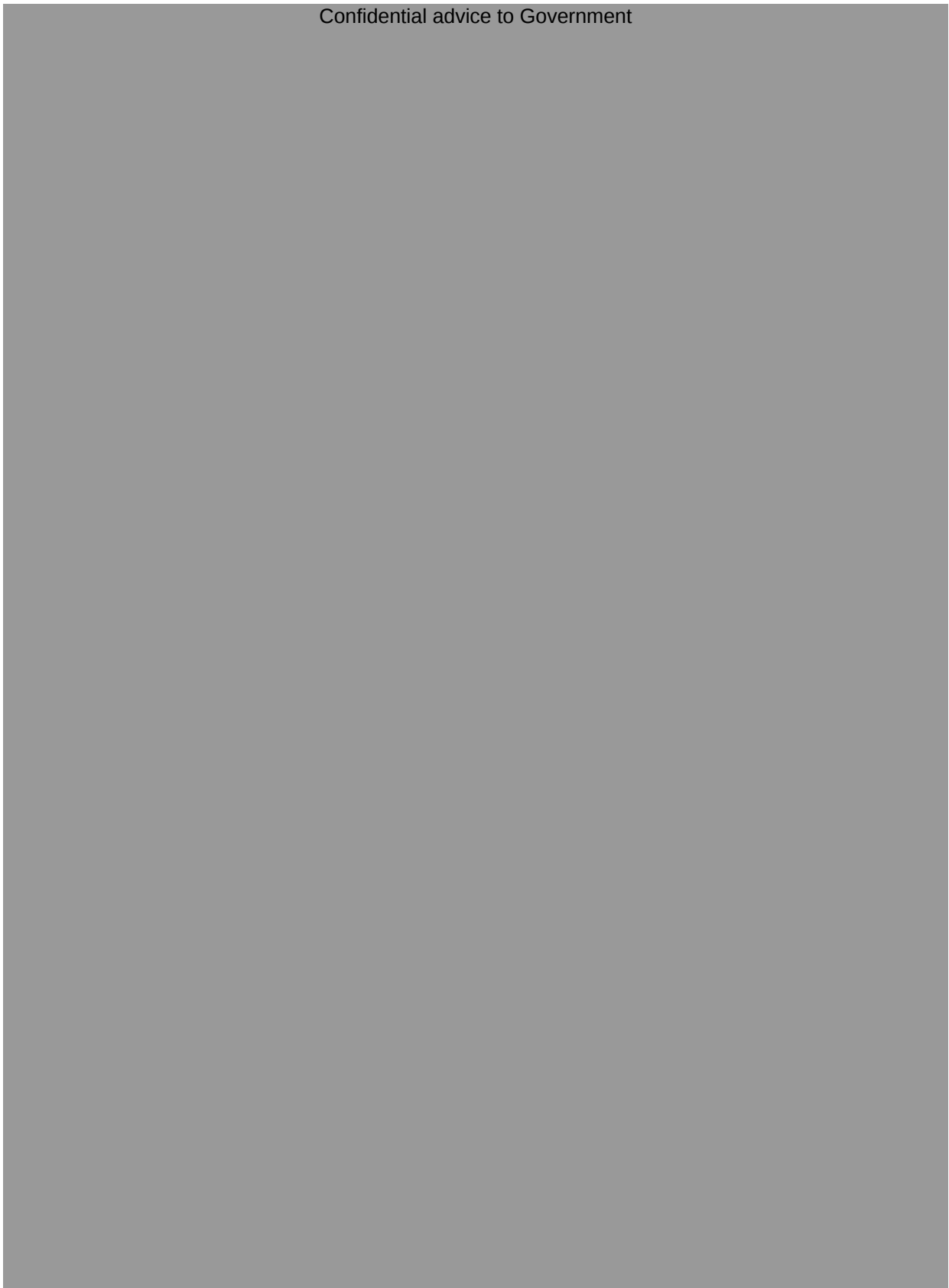
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