

Information commissioner withholds information

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The government's freedom of information commissioner has issued a notice condemning his own office for withholding information, according to Friends Of The Earth.

A dispute between the environmental campaign group and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) caused the embarrassing climbdown, which occurred when the ICO refused to provide the Friends of the Earth with correspondence between it and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

After failing to follow up the request for information and then repeatedly turning down the request made by Friends of the Earth, Richard Thomas issued a formal 'decision notice' against the department following an internal review.

The ICO's ruling was made on the basis that it had not provided any reason for its decision to withhold the letters, in line with the Freedom of Information Act.

But despite their obvious commitment to upholding the legislation the ICO has been attacked by Friends of the Earth's chief legal expert, Phil Michaels, for its continued failure to provide the letters.

"This case illustrates the increasingly shambolic state of the ICO and the need for improved staff training on implementing the very the Act which they are suppose to oversee," he said.

"Its failure in cases such as this makes it increasingly difficult for it to carry out its enforcement function with any credibility."

See [http://www.inthenews.co.uk/news/news/politics/information-commissioner-withholds-information-\\$441951.htm](http://www.inthenews.co.uk/news/news/politics/information-commissioner-withholds-information-$441951.htm)