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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 11 August 2012 2:10 PM
To: EHPP Landscapes & Ecosystems Section Mailbox
Subject: Submission today on the Native Vegetation Regulations
Importance: High

To All Concerned,

I wish to make a formal Submission on The Native Vegetation Regulations being proposed.

Land clearing is recognised as the greatest threat to native vegetation and wildlife in NSW and has serious negative impacts on our water quality.

Less than a decade ago NSW had one of the worst records for land clearing in the world, so in 2003 and 2005 the Native Vegetation laws were introduced to end broad scale land clearing in the state.

These laws are now under review and the government has proposed several changes that will weaken environmental protections.

A majority of farmers value their environment and are able to use NSW's Native Vegetation laws to their advantage. Property values have been higher on land where native vegetation has been retained, while pockets of native vegetation have lessened water losses and provided habitat for the natural predators of farm pests.

However, some farmers wish to entirely remove the laws that protect our landscapes and there is also significant pressure to weaken the scientifically developed rules that control applications to clear.

Native vegetation provides essential environmental, social and economic benefits, including protecting water quality, maintaining soil health and providing wildlife habitat.

- We need to learn from the decades of unsustainable land clearing, when millions of hectares of endangered ecological communities, threatened species habitat and wetlands were bulldozed and burned. The government should uphold strong native vegetation laws so that we don't return to the bad practices of the past.
 - I am disappointed that the New South Wales Government is proposing major changes to native vegetation laws that will allow for an increase in land clearing in large parts of the state.
 - Native vegetation provides essential environmental, social and economic benefits, including protecting water quality, maintaining soil health and providing wildlife habitat. Our threatened birds, mammals, reptiles and plants are dependent on the important remnant vegetation dotted across heavily cleared landscapes. We can't afford to lose more critical areas of bushland.
 - The Native Vegetation Act 2003 has played a critical role in stabilising the extent of native vegetation in New South Wales. The integrity of the legislative scheme is underpinned by the application of detailed regulations and a robust methodology for the assessment of environmental outcomes.
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- The changes currently proposed in the draft Native Vegetation Regulation 2012 will place very large areas of native vegetation at risk from unrestrained and unsustainable clearing. They will severely weaken the integrity of these important environment protections and inevitably lead to ongoing destruction and fragmentation of habitat.
- In particular, the proposals to weaken existing protections by allowing clearing of invasive native species and thinning of native vegetation without advice and approval from Catchment Management Authorities has the potential to result in the loss of hundreds of thousands of hectares of native vegetation.
- Healthy, biodiverse landscapes result in more productive agricultural systems. With the onset of climate change and its associated increase in extreme weather events and temperature fluctuations, conserving native vegetation will benefit biodiversity, farmers and the Australian economy into the future.
- Allowing ecological burning to occur as a routine agricultural management activity has the potential to negatively impact on our flora, fauna and endangered ecological communities as well as threaten life and property.
- Savings in administration costs and reductions in “green tape” should not be achieved at the expense of the essential environmental, social and economic benefits provided by native vegetation.
- I urge you to support a balanced approach to this reform process, and to oppose proposals which reduce the environmental protections contained in the regulations and significantly weaken the intent of the Native Vegetation Act 2003.

Kind regards

Sean Corrigan

