

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 16 August 2012 10:59 PM
To: EHPP Landscapes & Ecosystems Section Mailbox
Subject: Native Vegetation Regulation Review

I am writing in response to the proposed changes to native vegetation laws in NSW.

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. We need to learn from the past, from decades of unsustainable land clearing, when millions of hectares of endangered ecological communities, threatened species habitat and wetlands were bulldozed and burned.

The government has a responsibility to strongly uphold native vegetation laws so that we don't return to the bad practices of the past. 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.

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 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.

I do not believe that savings in administration costs and reductions in "green tape" should 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.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Ash Wyatt.