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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 17 August 2012 2:36 AM  
**To:** EHPP Landscapes & Ecosystems Section Mailbox  
**Cc:** office@premier.nsw.gov.au; Hillary Clinton; office@parker.minister.nsw.gov.au  
**Subject:** THERE'S A LAW AGAINST LAND CLEARING-KEEP IT

Native Vegetation Regulation Review

Conservation Policy and Strategy Section

Office of Environment and Heritage

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Email: [Native.vegetation@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Native.vegetation@environment.nsw.gov.au)

Re: THERE'S A LAW AGAINST LAND CLEARING-KEEP IT

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.

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring these remarks to your attention.

Yours sincerely,  
Robert E. Rutkowski

cc:

Premier Barry O'Farrell: [office@premier.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@premier.nsw.gov.au)

Environment Minister Robyn Parker: [office@parker.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@parker.minister.nsw.gov.au)

Secretary Hillary Clinton

