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**From:** CONOS [mailto:conos2@optusnet.com.au]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 23 August 2012 4:05 PM  
**To:** EHPP Landscapes & Ecosystems Section Mailbox  
**Cc:** Barry O'Farrell; Robyn Parker MP  
**Subject:** Native Vegetation Regulation Review

Conservation of North Ocean Shores Inc.  
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Conservation Policy and Strategy Section  
Office of Environment and Heritage,  
Level 12, PO Box A290  
Sydney South, NSW 1232

REF: Native Vegetation Regulation Review

It is imperative, and I urge the NSW government to take immediate measures to halt unsustainable land clearing. Over past decades millions of hectares of Endangered Ecological Communities, Threatened Species habitat and wetlands have been bulldozed and burnt. It is time the NSW Government made a stance to protect our native forests and valuable agricultural land by introducing strong native vegetation laws so that we do not return to the bad practices of the past.

It is difficult to comprehend that the coalition 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 a state government that can see the bigger picture and make the tough decisions that are long overdue in order to protect our world renowned forests and wetlands, crucial to the ongoing survival of threatened fauna species and their habitat. 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. NSW simply cannot 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 further fragmentation of habitat by those ignorant of just how fragile the environment is.

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. The current proposal to weaken existing protections by allowing clearing of 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.

Futhermore, ecological burning as a Routine Agricultural Management Activity can negatively impact on our flora, fauna and Endangered Ecological Communities, as well as threaten life and property as I have personally witnessed.

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 reject any proposals which will reduce the environmental protections contained in the regulations and any that would further weaken the intent of the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*.

Sincerely  
Stan Scanlon per CONOS  
21 August 2012