

Copy of letter No.D.O.No.17-31/77-FRY(FD), Ministry of Agriculture & Irrigation (Department of Agri) Krishi Bhavan, N.Delhi, 29-3-78

Sub: Prime Minister's directive on conversion of forests for other purposes issue of general guidelines.

In view of the Government's grave concern over instances of diversion of forest areas for non-forestry purposes, three D.O.letters Number C.11021/6/76-FRY(FD) of April 23, 1976, Aug, 30, 1976 and Dec. 20-76 were issued from this Ministry in regard to the prior technical assessment by the Inspector General of Forests of proposals for removal of forest cover. Since these D.O. letters were issued, this Department has been considering suitable guidelines to assist state and U.T. Governments to screen proposals for deforestation. These guidelines have now been finalized and have been approved by the Prime Minister. A copy of these guidelines is enclosed for adoption by the states.

Kindly acknowledge receipt

Yours Sincerely,

Sd/- N.D.Jayal

To

Shri.P.T.Devassy, CCF, Trivandrum

Copy to CCFs of all states

Endt. On P1-15956/78. Dt.20.04.78

Copy to all Conservator of Forests

Sd/- Chief Conservator of Forests (Dev)

Endt. On FS.6885/78 dt. 19-05-78

Copy with copy of enclosures to all Contract sections.
Copy to G1, G2 & G3 sections. Copy to Conservator of Forests,
Senior Supdt. & Admi. Asst.
Copy to FS stock file
CH section

For Conservator of Forests, Trichur

GUIDELINES FOR SCREENING PROPOSALS FOR DEFORESTATION

- (1) Any proposal involving deforestation of 10hs. And above should give due consideration to the consequent loss of production of forest raw materials from dwindling resources, to the deputation or disappearance of wildlife habitat as well as to long term effects on the environment and especially on the stability of catchments, erosion, siltation, etc. A full discussion on these items should form part of any project proposal.
- (2) All possible alternatives with costs should be fully discussed in the project reports to enable objective assessment and decision in the interest of realizing optimum benefits from the land and water resources without entailing sacrifice of large and, certain cases, unique forest areas of great biological significance in critical catchments which may arise as a result of, say, submergence under the reservoirs, setting up of agricultural farms, settlement of persons evicted from project areas, etc.
- (3) When an alternative involving diversion of forest areas smaller in extent and value is possible, even at a higher initial cost, a proper cost-benefit analysis should be made after taking into consideration the direct and indirect benefits from the forest and wildlife habitat, and projects even with higher total costs should normally be approved.
- (4) If any forest area is to be deforested, due to any project already under way or to be newly taken up, suitable areas should be identified and acquired elsewhere to compensate for the lose, and all necessary funds provided in the project to undertake reforestation or plantation keeping in mind the fact that good productive lands are equally necessary to meet the needs of wood for domestic and industrial uses. In addition, social forestry programme should be in testified on community and other lands, as well as for rehabilitating degraded forest areas if any, in the areas where diversion of forest lands may take place.
- (5) The state should particularly examined if any rare a ecotypes having uncommon communities or species and forming irreplaceable gene pools are to be deforested as are suit of the project. Every attempt should be made to find alternative to preserve such ecotypes. In cases of doubt the Forest Research Institute and, if necessary, the Botanical survey of India and the Zoological Survey of India, should be involved before the detailed planning for a project starts.
- (6) With regard to settlement of persons displaced from Project areas it is equally necessary to see whether they could be settled elsewhere by acquiring available land without making further inroads into forested areas.
- (7) All cases of deforestation should be considered against the premise that adequate land in any state should be kept under forests for meeting the requirement of Industrial wood, local timber and fuel wood.

- (8) Every national park and sanctuary or areas inhabited by threatened species should have an adequate and well managed surround. Attempts should be made to see that no project interferes with such parks, sanctuaries, areas and surrounds.
- (9) Whenever big projects involving large areas are involved, the Chief Conservator of Forests should invariably be consulted and the Inspector General of Forests always kept informed. In cases where the Chief Conservator of Forests considers the deforestation inadvisable he may bring the matter to the notice of the Inspector General of Forests so that, in case it is felt that the intervention of the Central Government is needed, it should be possible for the Inspector General of Forests to draw the attention of the Ministry of Agriculture towards the dimensions of the proposed damage. Thereafter the matter can be taken up and pursued with the State Governments.

Sd/-

For Chief Conservator of Forests.