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Dear Members

I am submitting to your committee today in the hope that you will understand the impact this proposed legislation will have on my grazing businesses. I have a 4164 hectare property. Of this we have some 900 hectares of pasture and 1100 of forest grazing. The remaining half of the property is fully vegetated and fenced out. We cannot use it, however we still pay rates on it and manage it with fire and for feral animals.

The proposed High Value Regrowth Category C and Reef Waterways Category R, puts a whole new layer of regulation over our valuable country. It prevents us from treating regrowth in the small, but vitally important, areas that are cleared and pastured. This means that we will run less cattle and not be able to muster our cattle easily (cattle hide in scrub).

The proposed new vegetation management layer is invasive. It means that our property is worth less and will be difficult to sell. We have no superannuation and rely on this asset for the future. We work hard at a tough but sustainable business. We have been hit by drought and suicide rates are still high in farmers. This layer of regulation is simply not fair and will really impact on the bottom line.

Our property has been very sensitively cleared and features wildlife corridors linking remnant patches. Our creeks all have remnant vegetation and we burn for ecological management. The new layers are trying to claim back land that was cleared under permit in previous labour governments. We do not need this restriction on our business – we already value vegetation in the landscape.

In reality the farmers are being punished again. We are again been made to pay for climate change and the reef. This is about appeasing UNESCO and meeting climate targets. It is unfair because this legislation does not apply on mining leases. Miners still clear massively for a heavily subsidised industry that is the source of the carbon.

In closing, I hope that you will not penalise me for trying to run a business that is reliant on the landscape and an easy target for unnecessary regulation. I have enclosed three maps for you. One of our property, one of the existing regulation and one of the proposed legislation.