

Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
Brisbane 4000

Submission :

Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016 (the Bill).

I lodge my support for the Bill.

I was extremely disappointed by the Newman Government's amendments to the land clearing laws and I am pleased the current Government is honouring its commitments restore the balance to these laws.

Whilst the Bill does not stop tree clearing it tightens the regulations and ensures inappropriate tree clearing is curtailed.

When I look at a map of Queensland, the patches of remnant native vegetation are relatively small and fragmented compared to the huge open areas that have been cleared for agriculture, urban living and development. It's important we have adequate regulations to restrict the amount and type of clearing that can be done which this Bill goes a long way to achieve.

Native vegetation is essential habitat for our wildlife, particularly endangered species like koalas. Native vegetation also provides valuable ecosystem services that we all rely on, clean air, clean water, soil production, catchment management and much more. Our native vegetation is crucial for the preserving our state's biodiversity assets.

It's particularly important catchments leading into the Great Barrier Reef are protected from clearing because of the damage that sediment does to corals. The Reef is already under heavy pressure from climate change as evidenced by massive bleaching this year. It's important we reduce risks to the Reef in every way we can. Protecting riparian vegetation is essential.

Native vegetation is a carbon sink and clearing vegetation simply adds to carbon emissions that lead to dangerous climate change.

I support the policy objectives of the Bill:

- reinstate the protection of high value regrowth on freehold and indigenous land;
- remove provisions which permit clearing applications for high value agriculture and irrigated high value agriculture; ·
broaden the protection of regrowth vegetation in watercourse areas to the Burnett-Mary, Eastern Cape York and Fitzroy Great Barrier Reef catchments; and
- reinstate compliance provisions for the reverse onus of proof and remove the 'mistake of fact' defence for vegetation clearing offences.

I also support the provision that makes much of the prospective legislation retrospective to 17 March in an effort to curtail a rush of panic clearing and applications to clear.

I urge the Committee to recommend the Bill be passed.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

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