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22 April 2016

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Dear Chair and Committee Members

***Submission to Committee on Vegetation Management (Reinstatement) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016***

I am a concerned individual, not affiliated with any organisation, writing to the Committee on an issue that I believe is very important and I feel that I need to have a say on.

I have been a resident of Far North Queensland all my life. Of concern to me are the immense changes that have occurred over the past nearly 50 years which have impacted greatly on the local environment.

Both Cairns and the Atherton Tablelands have seen massive changes due largely to land clearing practices by various parties, whether they are farmers, developers or individuals. The Atherton Tablelands, for example, consists mainly of farmlands, being the main industry here. Unfortunately, farming causes massive and widespread land clearing to the extent that no natural vegetation is left remaining on farmer's property. Is this really necessary? I regularly travel past farms that do not have a single tree standing, and the land is not utilised in one way or the other for years at a time. I really believe that farmers, or any landowner, for that matter, should need permits to clear their land and should only be allowed a piece or section of land to be cleared at a time, and only if they have a definite use for the land in the immediate future. Modern machinery makes it all too easy for landowners to clear their land with great ease. Unfortunately, though, once the trees and native vegetation is gone, it never returns. There needs to be some kind of balance with land clearing.

Indiscriminate tree clearing affects the overall environment and contributes to changes in the climate. For example, Cairns does not receive the rainfall it used to have largely due to clearing of rainforest.

I support the passing of the bill to protect Queensland's unique ecosystems and wildlife. Ecological biodiversity cannot be sustained when there is wholesale and indiscriminate land clearing. I believe the environment in Far North Queensland is the last frontier for seeing

native wildlife in their natural habitat, however many species are declining, according to local people who have remarked on how they do not tend to see particular wildlife or bird varieties any longer like they used to in the past. Everybody knows that land clearing is a major cause of species decline.

I support the passing of the bill because it removes provisions which permit clearing applications for high value agriculture and irrigated agriculture.

I support the passing of the bill because it reinstates the application of the riverine protection permit framework to the destruction of vegetation in a water course, lake or spring.

I support the passing of the bill because it broadens protection of vegetation in the Great Barrier Reef catchment areas of Queensland.

Limiting land clearing will help the Great Barrier Reef which is already under massive threat due to human related causes.

I support the passing of the bill as a matter of great urgency for the environmental health of Queensland.

Yours sincerely

Ann Palmer