

This is a transcription of a hand-written submission.

Submission to: Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee, Parliament House, Brisbane, Queensland, 4000, AU

August 24, 2012 Regarding: Land Protection Legislation – Flying Fox Control Amendment Bill 2012 (in Accordance with Standing Order 131, June 21, 2012) (By Gina Bilwin, NM, USA)

In Studying the ongoing Flying-Fox Bat “problem” in your country, specifically in this issue in Queensland, and this Bill, stated above, I am writing in URGENT REQUEST that you amend this bill to be explicit, specific and non-contradictory in the handling of the flying fox bats. If farmers and urban residents are given the “green light” (read: vague laws) to eradicate their local bats and colonies, without specific legislation and exacting regulations, there will be wholesale slaughter of the species, without legal repercussions. These ‘residents’ will not take the necessary precautions for the considerations of the animals (mothers and young) species differentiations (black or grey, or little red), removal or care (inhumane deaths and suffering).

Eradication of the s.88C of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 regulations is blatantly allowing for the extinction of valuable and needed species among the forests of Australia. The flying-fox bats fulfill very important ecological niches by dispersing the pollen and seeds of a wide variety and range of NATIVE Australian plants. Their interest in the domesticated fruit farms is by convenience and not necessarily coinciding with their preferential consumption of native fruit bearing foliage. The flying foxes are the ONLY mammalian nectar and fruit eaters to occupy substantial areas of the Australian subtropical rainforests and thus of KEY IMPORTANCE to these forests.

The argument of virus contagion since 1994 in horses and humans is written in terms of a scare tactic (not without financial and voter pressure by farmers, etc.) written without solid and definitive research results. The quoted: “75% fatality rate in horses and 60% fatality rate in humans” in a misleading, fear-based “rate” when in ACTUALITY – in 18 – EIGHTEEN YEARS – only 3 or 4 horses died per year, and in 18 years on 4 humans have died by this “Hendra virus”. (Do we need to look at any number of reasons many more horses die per year? Neglect? Hit by cars? Abuse? Or more humans die per year in car accidents, alcoholism, domestic abuse?) This is NOT an epidemic of viruses or deaths by flying foxes, NOR is it a reason to begin the slaughter of species Already listed as “VULNERABLE TO EXTINCTION”.

Early in the last century the population of the flying-fox bats was estimated in the healthy millions. In your bill you state “the emerging conditions of rising flying fox population in the urban areas” (vague), yet there was an overall decline by over 30% in the decade between 1989-1999 alone, with less than 300,000 bats counted in just the grey headed species. As the human population grows, quite out of balance with the natural environment, with extreme LACK OF CONSIDERATION of the NATIVE and ANCIENT species of Australia (as everywhere on Earth) every species endemic and unique to Australia is threatened with viruses, disease and extinction.

I SUBMIT TO YOU of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee – Rather than focusing on the viruses' transmission to domestic INTRODUCED – animals and humans ' FOCUS on the reasons the viruses are emerging – (i.e.: chlamydia among the Koalas) – STRESS, loss of habitat, loss of genetic diversity, loss of territory, loss of variety of food sources. Your Bill made into law, as it stands, is Vague, Contradictory and will simply result in the slaughter of a large number of flying fox species that are irreplaceable and Critical to the balance of Australia's tropical and subtropical forests and eco systems in Queensland and all of the states' forests of the Great Divide [sic] Range and beyond.

Thank you, (signed)

Gina Bilwin, 

Santa Fe, NM, USA