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Sub # 28

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2012 Submission  
HEALTH AND COMMUNITY  
SERVICES COMMITTEE

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** Monday, 17 December 2012 10:03 PM  
**To:** Health and Community Services Committee  
**Subject:** Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012

To Whom: it May Concern,

Object to the proposed Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012.

- National Parks' primary purpose is nature conservation. With only 5% of Qld within National Park (well below international standards), it seems unnecessary to open up these limited areas for private commercial ventures through the creation of permanent ecotourism infrastructure
- It is difficult to believe that if ecotourism infrastructure is commercially viable within National Parks, that private ventures would not have already initiated on adjoining private land, as has been done successfully at Lamington (O'Reilly's, Binna Burra) and Carnarvon Gorge
- National Parks are already challenged with weed and pest incursions, inappropriate fire, climate change, isolation and fragmentation and increasing visitor use pressure. The creation of new infrastructure to support ecotourism within national parks, eg buildings, roads, trails, will likely require further vegetation clearing, introduce weeds, pests and possibly disease (eg. soil-borne pathogens, rusts and other plant diseases) and fragment relatively intact forest, with subsequent edge effects - microclimate changes, weeds, fire.
- Increased vehicle traffic associated with permanent ecotourism facilities will increase likelihood of wildlife injury and death on roads
- The new services required to support and manage ecotourism within National Parks - water, rubbish collection, sewage/septic, power - will impact local resources, and come at high cost of supply
- Once ecotourism facilities are established in a National Park it may be difficult to constrain further expansion and/or development ('scope creep')
- A wiser investment into increasing the capacity of National Parks to support ecotourism and economic growth, would be to improve management of National Parks, focusing on existing facilities and conservation of the very natural values that make people want to visit them.

I also have concerns regarding removal of the timeframe and hectare limits on grants to occupy within the Forestry Act. Given the main driver behind the removal of limits is the 'cumbersome' process of granting permits for linear infrastructure, a separate guideline for this particular purpose could be created, with specific edge to area and time limits; removing limits altogether may leave the door too far open for exploitation and misapplication.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed Amendment Bill. National Parks are one of the last bastions for many species and environments; so much of the remaining landscape has been cleared or altered to such an extent that wildlife habitats they provide are significantly compromised. In addition, the location of many National Parks at the headwaters of water catchments, means detrimental impacts within National Parks WILL have flow-on impacts and decreased ecosystem services for downstream communities and environments.

Regarding economics, it costs far less to protect what we have than to fix damage caused through inappropriate activities. There is nothing to be lost by being patient and carefully deliberating decisions which have long-term ramifications for our communities, our grandchildren, rather than rushing into a short-term, quick-fix solutions. Our amazing natural resources, whether the coal or gas below the ground or the trees and animals above the ground, will only increase in value as other countries and states exploit and lose their assets.

Yours sincerely

Liz Horler