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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 19 December 2012 11:25 AM
To: Health and Community Services Committee
Subject: Submission re Nature Conservation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY
SERVICES COMMITTEE

I have very limited resources to make the kind of submission that is required to this proposed legislation. However, it does require at least some indication of its inappropriate planned use of National Parks (NPs). It seems the Bill and its EM and even submissions for its restriction are bedded down to focus on management issues rather than the fundamental question of whether such extended use and tenures should be allowed.

What I see in Nature is a magnificent structure that we can comprehend only very imperfectly, and that must fill a thinking person with a feeling of "humility." This is a genuinely religious feeling that has nothing to do with mysticism. - Albert Einstein. It is with such humility that any loss of protection of environment should be judged before driving fast towards commercial exploitation of nature and especially so for what our community has for a hundred years chosen to irrevocably protect..

A human being is part of a whole, called by us the "Universe," a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. - Albert Einstein. The purpose of a NP is to take that step beyond how for personal needs we might commercialise its resources and admit and commit to a long-term protection of the land by designation as a NP is placing it beyond such personal desires.

National Parks are a commitment to preservation. Theodore Roosevelt said *"it is also vandalism wantonly to destroy or to permit the destruction of what is beautiful in nature, whether it be a cliff, a forest, or a species of mammal or bird. Here in the United States we turn our rivers and streams into sewers and dumping-grounds, we pollute the air, we destroy forests, and exterminate fishes, birds and mammals -- not to speak of vulgarizing charming landscapes with hideous advertisements. But at last it looks as if our people were awakening."* It is the nature of the NP and not what man can build for their own enjoyment that is the purpose of a NP..

NPs are a draw card for tourism by the very act of a hundred years of such conservation in Queensland. It is commitment to that conservation that should outweigh all other considerations for use of the National Parks. Current public access and use of National Parks has been structured to allow Public awareness of their value and for each visitor to appreciate theirs and the community's commitment to that preservation.

Tourism in National Parks is a by-product of public access and should not be extended to interference with the National Parks by private restrictive rights being granted in any form outside that public access. Further, public access should not be increased without detailed and thorough environmental risk analysis of impact to the primary purpose of conservation in National Parks. Even development directly adjacent to a National Park should also be subject to similar environmental risk analysis before approval. Many studies have shown that the health of land surrounding National Parks and the ecological corridors between them plays a significant role in the ecological health of the National Park itself.

The Explanatory Memorandum states:

- *"The tourism industry has identified demand for privately funded, purpose built, 'low impact' infrastructure ecotourism projects, on and adjacent to national parks, to provide new and unique opportunities to attract both domestic and international visitors to Queensland."* Where is the detailed and quantifiable benefit to NPs to outweigh the seen impacts and risk percentage of unforeseen impacts to NPs of such planned encroachments?
- *"To amend the Forestry Act 1959 (Forestry Act) to improve permit administration by removing the 7 year maximum term and 10 hectare maximum area limits on the grant of a permit to occupy (occupation permit).*

A purpose of restricted tenures is to allow for the changing needs in conservation management of NPs. Granting longer tenures is ruling out the right to review and change ecological management of such tenures or even revoke such tenures without undue penalty where it is shown they significantly impede the ecological preservation of the area.

- *"Subsequent analysis, including examining the outcomes of approaches in other jurisdictions, found that commercial viability would be significantly improved by allowing for sustainable permanent ecotourism infrastructure authorised under a lease, with a lease term matched to the level of investment, risk profile and capacity for return on investment."* Basically this appears to mean that if you are prepared to put in enough infrastructure you can effectively own the NP land and its supporting access and servicing facility access ways by long term tenure. **This is little less than a sale of NP land which is completely inconsistent with the purpose of the land being a NP.** The presumption in the statement *"Unless large enough to meet every foreseeable need, the designated maximums could still be inadequate for some large projects, while at the same time having no limiting effect on, and therefore no relevance to, the grant of permits for smaller and shorter projects."* should be reversed in that if the project has such a large footprint then by its very nature it will unacceptably diminish the NP and is unacceptable use.

The protection offered by continued compliance with the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and State and Commonwealth Native Title legislation is reduced by loss of an over-riding and presumptive full protection offered by being NP. The purpose of greater protection as being a NP is significantly diminished where its use is to be assessed by no significantly greater standard than applies to land outside a NP.

The Private Sector have access to 95% of Queensland land for their developments, but now they want the miserly 5% that has been put aside over decades for the protection of our native flora and fauna in undisturbed areas.

On behalf of myself and the future conservation of our National Parks I sincerely object to open National Parks to restricted private access or any form of tenure that allows for privately owned/managed facilities for tourism. These activities can be created outside the National Parks to preserve the integrity of the conservation values in fact and in spirit of that conservation purpose.

For if one link in nature's chain might be lost, another might be lost, until the whole of things will vanish by piecemeal."~ Thomas Jefferson

With appreciation to your consideration

David Sykes

But our national heritage is richer than just scenic features; the realization is coming that perhaps our greatest national heritage is nature itself, with all its complexity and its abundance of life, which, when combined with great scenic beauty as it is in the national parks, becomes of unlimited value. This is what we would attain in the national parks." George M. Wright, Joseph S. Dixon, and Ben H. Thompson, Fauna of the National Parks of the United States, 1933.

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Best Regards,

David Sykes

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