

**Margaret Telford**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 25 June 2014 6:35 PM  
**To:** State Development Infrastructure and Industry Committee  
**Subject:** Changes to Wild Rivers legislation

25 June 2014

The Research Director  
State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000  
[sdiic@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:sdiic@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee consideration of the State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014**

I write regarding the above Inquiry, and wish the following to be accepted as a formal submission to the Committee.

We must stop destroying the environment, not simply for the environment's sake but also for the health and survival of humanity. Every apparently small and local example of environmental destruction contributes to the global threat. Short term economic gain for a few should not be prioritised over the long term safety of humanity.

I oppose the sections of the *State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014* (the Bill) that seek to repeal the *Wild Rivers Act 2005*. My reasons for this are that the Bill will lead to the removal of vital river protections that have been in place in Queensland for the past ten years, the case for such removal has not been successfully made, and the alternatives currently proposed are weak, complex and lack transparency. I have previously written to the Premier on this topic.

Queensland has some of the last remaining, pristine or near pristine waterways left of the planet and it needs strong legislation protecting wild rivers. The Wild Rivers Act 2005 provides strong protection. Wild River Declarations have ensured that new destructive developments such as mining, dams and intensive irrigated agriculture have been prohibited in the most sensitive parts of the river systems, while allowing a wide range of economic, cultural, social and recreational activities and uses to be unaffected. Rights under the Native Title Act were protected, and a number of commercial enterprises, including Indigenous-run ones, have operated in Wild River areas unhindered.

The alternative 'Strategic Environmental Area' (SEA) approach to rivers protection in Queensland being put forward by the government is too weak and complex in its approach to restricting mining and other destructive development in sensitive river areas, and loses the capacity under Wild Rivers legislation to ensure comprehensive management of whole river systems. Most critically, the proposed SEA alternatives to Wild Rivers are open to arbitrary amendment and lack the transparency and precision that Wild River Declarations have provided in terms of geographic boundaries. Parliament should retain the capacity to scrutinise Ministerially-endorsed mapped areas purporting to protect rivers.

This change was not foreshadowed in the last State election, nor mooted in any public policy discussions. No clear case has been made for this action. I believe that Queensland's wild rivers are too ecologically, culturally and socially important to once again be exposed to destructive development threats.

I urge the Committee to recommend against the proposed repeal of the Wild Rivers Act, as proposed in the Bill under examination.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sainsbury  
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