

From:
To: [SDNRAIDC](#)
Subject: Vegetation Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018
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Joan Dillon

20th March 2018

Committee Secretary
State Development, Natural Resources
and Agricultural Industry Development Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000
Email: sdnraidc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee

***Submission to the Inquiry in Vegetation Management and Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2018***

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the above Inquiry. This submission is made on behalf of Joan Dillon. I am a retired agricultural scientist with a long-term interest in the health and productive capacity of the Australian environment. My own small property on fragile soils has been revegetated over the past 20 years and is now protected by a vegetation covenant in order to prevent those soils from washing away or being otherwise degraded as has occurred in the past, due to what were effectively extractive cropping practices.

Queensland has witnessed a surge in land clearing since laws and policies were seriously weakened by the Newman LNP government. It is now time to ensure our native woodlands, the native wildlife that relies on them for their habitats, and the iconic Great Barrier Reef are afforded much better protection. Over time, the community needs to see reforms leading to land clearing rates falling significantly.

I strongly support the government's intention to substantially strengthen Queensland's land clearing laws. Overall, I note and endorse the Bill in seeking to achieve:

- The removal of high value agriculture as a relevant clearing purpose and the scrapping of that permit process;
- The protection of high conservation value regrowing woodlands, under a broader definition that includes ecologically significant woodlands that are 15 or more years old. We have lost too much of our woodlands.
- The scrapping of the Thinning 'self-assessable' accepted development clearing code;
- The extension of riparian area protections to the last three Great Barrier Reef catchments;
- The capacity to reclassify Category X into Category A;
- The reinstatement of Riverine Protection Permits; and
- The termination of current Area Management Plans.

Provisions for 'managing thickening' will depend on vegetation type, and I strongly endorse changes to the Bill in that regard. I also recognise that a second option is to have the revised processes and tests that would be established under the Bill as a means of delivering a greater level of protection for some native woodlands.

At the same time, I am disappointed that the Bill includes provisions that could be used to allow new self-assessable codes (Clause 4 of the Bill), create new Area Management Plans (Clause 14 of the Bill), and delay the removal of existing Area Management Plans for up to two years (Clause 14 of the Bill). Allowing protected woodlands to revert to unprotected Category X (Clause 13 of the Bill) would appear to give scope for the bulldozers to return. “Circumstances” would need to be very clearly defined and in the interests of the vegetation type, it’s underlying soils and the habitat it provides.

I am also disappointed that government is not proposing to substantially tighten up fodder harvesting provisions, including major restrictions and tying any clearing to official drought declaration.

I would like to see the Bill and associated policies strengthened to address each of these matters, and respectfully ask that the Committee examine options for recommending changes to the Bill and codes accordingly.

I am very anxious to ensure that with the passing of the Bill, protected vegetation, be it Category B (remnant), Category C (high value regrowth), or Category R (Reef riparian), is fully and properly mapped and protected across Queensland.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to raise these matters.

Yours sincerely

Joan Dillon