

Re: Review of the regional forest agreements NSW

I am writing in response to consultation on the NSW Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) and to state my opposition to their renewal. The RFAs have failed to meet their aims and have resulted in the loss of habitat and decline in native species within NSW native forests.

The RFAs state that their objectives are to deliver:

- certainty of resource access and supply to industry – building investment confidence
- ecologically sustainable forest management – ensuring forests are appropriately managed and regenerated
- an expanded and permanent forest conservation estate – to provide for the protection of Australia's unique forest biodiversity.

Guaranteeing “certainty of resource access and supply to industry” compromises the objectives of sustainability and protection as current forest industry activities of in NSW are running down and using up the existing forest “resources”. It is obvious to anyone who travels through the state forest areas of NSW that NSW forests are being depleted and degraded by forestry activities. Scientific reports and surveys also indicate that populations of native animals that depend on forests have declined severely over the life of the RFAs.

Logging also of necessity destroys habitat and changes soil and water systems. Native forests are a finite resource and current logging practices are reducing that resource, our forests are disappearing. Therefore guaranteeing certainty of supply to industry from a shrinking resource means that the pressure on forests will only increase in the future, accelerating the decline of native species in forest communities.

It seems therefore that delivering “certainty of resource access and supply to industry” as a major objective of the RFAs is incompatible with the objectives of protection of the native forest and ensuring species survival into the future. As such the RFAs do not work as their objectives are internally inconsistent.

The expiry of the RFAs over the next few years presents an opportunity to provide permanent protection of the remaining NSW native forests and wind down forestry activities within them.

Public native forest logging is unsustainable. It is time that our state forests, owned by the people of NSW, were managed in the best interests of the public. I recommend that the NSW and Commonwealth governments:

- Not renew RFAs because they are a failed model for forest management;
- Heed the accumulated evidence and use the expiry of the RFAs to trigger a just transition of workers out of the native forest logging industry; and
- Protect public native forests to ensure our wildlife, water and carbon stores are safeguarded for future generations by implementing strategies like the NSW National Park Association's Great Koala National Park proposal and Forests For All plan.

I confirm that my submission does not contain sensitive information and can be published in full on the Environment Protection Authority and/or the Department of Primary Industries website.

I understand that the Environment Protection Authority, Department of Primary Industries and/or the independent reviewer may contact me about my submission.

Yours sincerely,

Stephanie Knox

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