



Mountain Districts Association

Working for the good of the mountain districts

www.mountaindistrictsassociation.com.au

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To EPA Representative,

I am writing on behalf of the Mountain Districts Association (MDA), a not-for-profit incorporated association representing the rural communities in the hinterland of the NSW Central Coast. We are committed to protecting our unique natural environment and wildlife, farming lands, mineral resources and water. This submission is intended to express our opposition, in the strongest possible terms, to the renewal of the NSW Regional Forest Agreements (RFA's)

The MDA is concerned that the current process of review of the RFA's is an attempt by the State Government to seek electoral support from the logging industry, and is not a genuine review of the performance of RFAs, or whether they have met their aims. If the review was genuine the Berejiklian and Turnbull governments would not have already committed to the extension of logging as outlined in the RFA's.

The progress report fails to take account of new knowledge, particularly on climate change and its increasing threat to ecological systems, biodiversity and human wellbeing (social, health, and economic). Climate change was not considered as part of the original RFA's, but is now the largest social, economic and environmental challenge we face. It is irresponsible to continue logging when we know it reduces the carbon storage capacity of forests.

The MDA firmly believes that the RFA's must not be renewed. This belief is also based on information contained in the 2016 National Parks Association (NPA) review of RFA's in NSW, which concluded that they have failed to achieve their aims by failing to protect the environment, failing to result in a thriving timber industry, and being responsible for driving climate change.

Native forests are a public asset which must be managed for the public good, now and into the future. Citizens should not bear the negative costs of the profit making activities of large corporations. Current logging practices are destroying wildlife, robbing future generations of sources of timber and reducing the carbon capture, recreation and clean water that forests provide.

Public native forest logging is unsustainable. It is time that our state forests, the property of the citizens of NSW, were managed in the best interests of the public, and the majority of people in NSW support protecting forests.

The MDA supports the National Parks Association of NSW's (NPA) "Forests for All" plan that seeks to protect forests to facilitate increased human access for health and wellbeing, recreation and education. We know that the value of carbon, water and tourism from forests is much greater than timber, and that protected areas are important for the economy.

The Government should use the expiration of the RFAs as the point at which it implements a just transition out of native forest logging on public land.

I confirm that our 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 our submission.