

Subject: REPRESENTATION: POOR SITE INSPECTION REPORT ON FOREST DIVERSION PROPOSAL FOR RENUKA DAM
Date: Fri, 04 Jun 2010 12:13:53 +0530
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To

The Chairperson

The Forest Advisory Committee

Ministry of Environment and Forests

Paryavaran Bhavan

New Delhi

4th June 2010

SUBJECT: POOR SITE INSPECTION REPORT ON FOREST DIVERSION PROPOSAL FOR RENUKA DAM

Sir,

In continuation with our previous two communications to you, dated 19th August and 11th November 2009 (Annexure 1 and 2), we are once again approaching you with our concerns related to the forest diversion proposal for the Renuka Dam in Himachal Pradesh Sirmaur.

We are aware that the FAC of the MoEF was awaiting the Site Inspection Report (S.I.R) from the Conservator of Forests at North Regional Office in Chandigarh for a decision on the matter. We have obtained a copy of the S.I.R from MoEF vide the RTI Act 2005 and are shocked to see that the S.I.R does not address or even mention any of the issues that have been repeatedly raised in our representations to your committee. Our pressing concerns related to the Forest Clearance include

- * Loss of forest based livelihoods and no settlement of rights under the Forest Rights Act 2006
- * Loss of forests and biodiversity in the Renuka Wildlife Sanctuary and adjoining areas
- * Non Coverage of Shamlaat lands (private and common forests) in the FC process – no counting of trees on private forest lands

The details of these are in the enclosed representations that were submitted earlier.

During the visit of the Conservator of Forests, Mr Sheravat, in August 2009, we had personally met him and appraised him of all the above concerns and submitted a detailed file with all the written

documentation to support our objections related to the Forest Clearance in the matter. It is rather unfortunate that the S.I.R does not even mention any of these critical issues despite a personal appraisal given to the CF during the site visit. The entire purpose of the S.I.R is completely lost if these inquiries are not made and put on record.

A detailed report titled “Dispossessing Mountain Communities: Who will pay for Delhi's water?” (annexure 3 - attached) has also been submitted to your department which outlines the problems with the Forest diversion process for the Renuka Dam as well as the over all environmental and social impacts.

We do sincerely hope that you will look into these concerns in detail. While we believe that the forest diversion for the Renuka Dam will have irreversible impacts on the ecology of the area and livelihoods of the people and should be avoided at all costs, we appeal that atleast the legal provisions under the Forest Rights Act 2005 and the Forest Conservation Act 1980 should be followed in letter and spirit before Forest clearance is recommended.

Thank you

Sincerely

Durga Ram and Puran Chand, Renuka Bandh Sangharsh Samiti, Sirmaur, HP

Manshi Asher and Prakash Bhandari, Environment Research and Action Collective, Palampur, HP