

Seventeenth Loksabha

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**Title: Regarding creation of Buffer Zone around Forest Boundary -
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ADV. DEAN KURIAKOSE (IDUKKI): I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards an important matter that involves the lives of lakhs of people who are living near the forest in my constituency Idukki. The latest Supreme Court's verdict on making 1 km as buffer zone after forest boundary will largely affect the people in Kerala. Originally, this verdict was based on an ecological issue raised by the state of Tamil Nadu. However, the Court made the verdict for the entire country without even consulting the other States. The ecological factors and the way to protect them varies from state to state. Hence, It is not scientific to apply the same standard of protection of ecology across the states. This verdict has had huge negative impacts for the state of Kerala, which is thickly populated and where lakhs of people reside very close to national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. The state has 24 national parks and wildlife sanctuaries wherein almost 30 per cent comes under forest areas. Hence, the Government should intervene immediately and take necessary initiatives relating to verdict of Hon'ble Supreme Court declaring 1 km Buffer Zone. It is also imperative to have a comprehensive legislation to settle the matter if necessary. The environment must be protected but not at the cost of human lives. Hence, I urge upon the Government to intervene immediately and make sure that the issue is resolved in people's interest at the earliest.

