

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:90
ANSWERED ON:28.11.2011
RELAXATION IN FOREST LAND NORMS FOR PROJECTS
Gaikwad Shri Eknath Mahadeo

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has decided to relax environmental clearance norms for projects requiring forest land;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether an adverse impact on environment is likely to take place in the event of such relaxations;
- (d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (e) whether the Government has formulated any guidelines so as to reduce the diversion of forest land; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a) to (f): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 90 REGARDING "RELAXATION IN FOREST LAND NORMS FOR PROJECTS" ASKED BY SHRI EKNATH M. GAIKWAD DUE FOR ANSWER ON 28.11.2011.

(a) & (b): Ministry of Environment & Forests considers the proposals for grant of environmental clearance in terms of the provisions of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006. Para 8 (v) of the EIA Notification, 2006 states "Clearances from other regulatory bodies or authorities shall not be required prior to receipt of applications for prior environmental clearance of projects or activities, or screening, or scoping, or appraisal, or decision by the regulatory authority concerned, unless any of these is sequentially dependent on such clearance either due to a requirement of law, or for necessary technical reasons."

Vide Office Memorandum dated 31st March, 2011, Ministry of Environment & Forests prescribed the procedure to be followed for consideration of projects for grant of environmental clearance under EIA Notification, 2006, which involve forestland. This required the projects involving forestland to obtain stage-I forestry clearance before submitting their application for obtaining environmental clearance.

Vide Office Memorandum dated 9th September, 2011, the earlier Office Memorandum was amended to the extent that the projects involving forestland could apply for environment clearance without waiting for grant of forestry clearance. However, the environment clearance will be issued only after the stage-I forestry clearance has been obtained.

(c) & (d): As the issuance of environmental clearance continue to be linked to the grant of stage-I forestry clearance, no adverse impact on environment is likely to take place as a result of the changed procedure.

(e) & (f): Ministry of Environment and Forests issues guidelines from time to time under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 which are regulatory in nature to regulate the mechanism and process of forest diversion.