

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2023
ANSWERED ON:19.08.2013
RELAXATION IN CLEARANCE NORMS
Das Shri Ram Sundar;Karwariya Shri Kapil Muni

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 it is likely to have an adverse impact on environment;
- (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 ?

Answer

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

(a) to (d) : As per the guidelines for granting environmental clearance in respect of projects involving forest land, the environment clearance is issued only after the grant of Stage - I approval for forest clearance. The Ministry of Environment & Forests (MOEF) received representations from various stakeholders to delink grant of Environment clearance from forest clearance in case of linear projects such as roads, transmission lines, pipelines etc. involving patches of forest land along their alignment, often stretching to several hundred kilometers. After careful consideration of the matter and with the prior approval of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, these guidelines have been partially modified vide Office Memorandum No. J-11015/200/ 2008-IA.II (M) dated 19.03.2013 , as per which pending grant of Stage - I forest clearance for non-forestry use of the forest land, the environment clearance to linear projects may be issued subject to stipulations contained in this Office Memorandum.

(e) & (f) : Use of forest land for non-forest purpose requires prior approval of Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Such approvals are given in accordance with the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2003 and the guidelines under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 issued by the Central Government. Such approvals are accorded only when diversion of forest land is bare minimum and unavoidable after examination of all possible alternatives.