

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1829  
ANSWERED ON:16.12.2013  
FOREST CONSERVATION ACT  
Kashyap Shri Virender

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

- (a) whether the Government has any plan to dilute Forest Conservation Act, 1980 in the country especially in hilly areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the State Government of the Himachal Pradesh and the people's representatives have ever requested to dilute some of the sections of the Act so as to help them in development in such areas where permission is to be sought from the Union Government;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

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

- (a) & (b) Central Government does not have any plan to dilute Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in the country.
- (c) to (e) Chief Minister, Himachal Pradesh requested the Central Government to increase the general approval accorded under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of forest land for public utility development projects of 11 categories to be executed by Government Departments, involving upto one hectare of forest land in each case, to five hectares of forest land in each case and extend the same to road constructions activities also.

Central Government keeping in view that use of forest land for non-forest purpose, especially in the biodiversity rich, ecologically fragile hill State of Himachal Pradesh, which apart from being highly prone to soil erosion and landslides, is also the habitat for several endangered species of flora and fauna, needs careful scrutiny by the Central Government to ensure long term ecological security, has not accepted the said request.