

John Hillcoat
57 Barnby Street
Murwillumbah
05/06/2014

Director
Planning Coordination and Support
Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney 2001

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a resident of the Northern Rivers with a degree in ecological science and welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposed project.

Objections

I strongly object to these proposals:

1. downgrading of rainforest, old growth forest, wetlands, mangroves, riparian vegetation and 'rare, endangered and vulnerable ecosystems' from E2 to E3 (Recommendation 1 & 7).
 - These areas are all of exceptional conservation value and deserve the highest protection.
 - These values must remain under the protection of E2 zones as explicitly recommended by the NSW Department of Planning and Industry (Practice Note PN 09-002 – Environmental Protection Zones), and as is prescribed throughout the remainder of NSW.
 - This rezoning will also weaken protection from CSG and other mining activities in our most sensitive natural areas by automatically permitting these activities under the 'Mining' SEPP - State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007.
2. downgrading proposed E4 zones to residential zones (Recommendation 14).
 - These areas include core Koala Habitat, several Endangered Ecological Communities and significant threatened species habitat and their exceptional conservation value deserves the highest protection.
 - These values must remain under the protection of E4 zones as explicitly recommended by the NSW Department of Planning and Industry (Practice Note PN 09-002 – Environmental Protection Zones), and as is prescribed throughout the remainder of NSW.
 - These values cannot are not given adequate protected by the Tree Preservation Order alone.

3. removing all protection for wildlife corridors mapped by the National Parks & Wildlife Service

- Wildlife corridors should be included as an environmental overlay to ensure they are considered in planning decisions.
- 4. allowing 'extensive agriculture' such as grazing, cropping and irrigated pasture within E2 zones (Recommendation 4).
 - These activities can be highly destructive of the ecological values in environmentally sensitive areas
 - This redrafting of E2 provisions will also weaken protection from CSG and other mining activities in our most sensitive natural areas by automatically permitting these activities under the 'Mining' SEPP - State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007.

Good aspects

But there are good aspects and these include:

1. the Review's endorsement of environmental zones and overlays in far north coast council Local Environment Plans.
2. the Review recommendation that Environment Protection Zones be expanded in Kyogle, Lismore, Ballina & Tweed Shires to include all environmentally sensitive areas not currently protected.
3. the Review's endorsement of environmental overlays for buffers around estuaries, streams, wetlands, and rainforest.
4. the Review recommendation that guidelines be developed for the mapping of scenic amenity and that mapped areas be included as an environmental overlay.
5. cleared land subject to coastal hazards, including climate change effects, being removed from the E2 zone, though these should be placed in a new coastal hazard zone rather than becoming an overlay.

Recommendations

In light of the above points, I would like to see the following:

1. the Review's endorsement of environmental zones and overlays in far north coast council Local Environment Plans.
2. the Review recommendation that Environment Protection Zones be expanded in Kyogle, Lismore, Ballina & Tweed Shires to include all environmentally sensitive areas not currently protected.
3. the Review's endorsement of environmental overlays for buffers around estuaries, streams, wetlands, and rainforest.
4. the Review recommendation that guidelines be developed for the mapping of scenic amenity and that mapped areas be included as an environmental overlay.

5. cleared land subject to coastal hazards, including climate change effects, being removed from the E2 zone, though these should be placed in a new coastal hazard zone rather than becoming an overlay.

Yours sincerely,

John Hillcoat