

**From:**  
**To:**  
**Subject:**  
**Date:**

Dear Committee Secretary,

We are workers in and/or supporters of the Australian forestry, forest products and timber industry and draw the following points to your attention:

1. Several regional economies and communities already devastated by COVID-19 face an employment catastrophe.
2. In May 2020, a decision in the Federal Court interpreted how Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) interact with the EPBC Act in a way that the parliament never intended the act to operate.
3. Subsequent Commonwealth Government inaction in response to this has had wide ranging negative impacts on job security and workers in the native hardwood forest industry in Australia.
4. The real-life consequences of this include that tens thousands of jobs reliant on the hardwood timber industry across Australia are in jeopardy.
5. The impacts are already being felt as thousands of workers face being stood down imminently and scores of businesses, many of them small and medium sized operations face ruin due to wood supply crunches resulting from injunctions and other associated events such as forest managers not being able to sign contracts due to ongoing uncertainty.
6. The Australian Senate support for Regional Forest Agreements in the Australian Senate in February resolving that "RFAs remain the best way of balancing environmental, economic and social demands for our native forests" and acknowledging that "The Australian forest industry uses world-class sustainable forest management practices and supports the employment of more than 52,000 hardworking Australians making it an industry that deserves to be celebrated".
7. Urgent action is now needed by the Federal Parliament and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Regional Forest Agreements) Bill 2020 represents the key opportunity to act in defence of the Australian forestry industry and the jobs of workers, their families, and communities which rely on it.

Given the above, we recommend the swift passage of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment (Regional Forest Agreements) Bill 2020

Sincerely,