

Steven Lawson

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19 May 2000

The Secretary,

House of Representatives

Standing Committee on

Environment and Heritage

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Re: Inquiry into the impact of conservation controls imposed on landholders

I am a private land owner in the Otway region of Victoria involved in native and non-native forestry.

I have concerns about the direction of the environment movement, but I am limited in my ability to respond and influence outcomes because I have to work! Just to read the volumes of "expert"

reports and recommendations is a full time occupation. This submission will probably be read or assessed by an "expert". An expert in report writing, not environmental management.

Our current system is counter productive. The better private land holders manage land, the more controls are placed over their land, as it is deemed to have special significance.

State government impose requirements on local government, but local communities cannot address compensation at correct scale "We will be paying our selves for their benefit."

Public land management principles are applied to private land without due consideration to the impacts.

Many public- good conservation measures are responses to perceived problems rather than real. There are many people whose direct employment is based principally on these perceptions.

The impact of public good conservation is to reduce on a long and short term basis the productivity of private land.

Responding to regulations cost time and money.

Constantly changing rules create a climate of insecurity in long term planning. (Why plant a tree that you can't cut down.) This also reduces the value of assets to a more immediate value.

In our globalized society money is the measurement of value, and so if it is deemed that private land must be managed in a certain fashion, then the government must negotiate (offer) enough money to buy the style of management they desire. This may sound more expensive but could be

considered direct investment into out comes that are fair. This would bring more direct responsibility to

decision making. Small individual land owners bear direct responsibility for their actions and live in their environment.

It would seem that "Those in charge" Have no faith in current managers and wish to change by prescription from the top, rather than the far more historically successful method of facilitation,

involving consultation at the bottom.

I hope that these comments may be of use. Please call (03) 52311508 A/H to discuss, or

clarify any matters mentioned.

Sincerely Yours,

Steven Lawson