

I am writing in support of the Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labeling—Palm Oil) Bill 2009 . I fully support the mandatory labeling of palm oil in all food products as I chose to be a conscience consumer. There are three points on the matter I wish to address.

1. Currently not only do I not know what I am putting in mine (and my soon to be baby's) body. I have a right to chose what I consume. Palm oil is high in saturated fat. I chose to live a healthy lifestyle so why should I not be allowed to chose the products I wish to avoid? I choose to avoid products that could lead to cardiovascular disease and/or stroke. As a government you are taking away my basic human right. Supporting this bill will allow me to make an informed decision about the products I choose and the corporations I choose to support.

2. By not allowing myself as a consumer to make an informed decision, I could very well be contributing to the destruction of habitat and be joining in the annihilation of a wild species. A species that I currently support with funding and campaigning. The strongest support I can give this species is to have the ability to choose the products I purchase. There are sustainable options available for the production of palm oil. At this stage they are being ignored as they do not allow for huge profit margins. Again, it is obvious that the dollar speaks more than the saving of a species, clean air, moral obligations and a better planet. Huge profit margins are not enough of a reason to allow the annihilation of a wild species and the contribution to global warming through deforestation and burning.

3. Sustainable palm oil also means better labour laws on plantations. The Australian government has blemishes against human rights issues. Please do not add this one as well. Even though they may not be on our shores we are morally obliged to take human rights into consideration as well. If climate change has not shown us that we are indeed global citizens then what will?

I ask you, is there any point in pushing ahead with a carbon trading scheme, housing insulation and water restrictions if a fundamental act such as this is to be ignored? The current palm oil market is destroying the planet, not only Indonesia and Malaysia.

The government, whichever side of the fence it sits on, needs to begin to act on moral grounds. We need to not only save the planet for our children, but for ourselves.

Marina Eleftheriadis Gurm