



12 April, 2010

Community Affairs
Senate of the Australian Parliament
Canberra; ACT. 2600

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To whom it may concern

Re: support for the Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling- Palm Oil) Bill 2009.

I write in strong support of the Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling- Palm Oil) Bill 2009.

The conversion of lowland forests to oil palm plantations in south-east Asia is one of the most significant threats to the region's biodiversity. This is especially the case in Indonesia and Malaysia, which are the world's two largest producers of palm oil. In Indonesia, the loss of lowland forests is the single greatest threat to orang-utans, on both Borneo and Sumatra, and estimates indicate that the species could be lost in the wild within a decade unless this pressure is reversed.

I recognise that oil palms generate important income for the countries and communities concerned, but at the moment the vast majority of palm oil is not produced sustainably. Currently, consumers in Australia do not know if the product they are purchasing contains palm oil because it is not stated on the product label. This is at the heart of the Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling- Palm Oil) Bill 2009 – to give consumers the knowledge about which products contain palm oil, and subsequently, providing them with the choice to decide if they wish to purchase a product that is contributing to the loss of biodiversity in south-east Asia.

Amending the Food Standards legislation will address this and is a very important step towards increased sustainability in palm oil production.

I request that this submission be considered in support of the Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling- Palm Oil) Bill 2009, and confirm that it can be made public, including on the web.

Yours sincerely

Mr. Chris Banks
Manager, Conservation Partnerships.

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