

Steve Harvey and Leanne Copping
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c/- community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please consider this letter a submission regarding the Private Members bill introduced in November last year by Senator Nick Xenophon – the **Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling – Palm Oil) Bill 2009**.

We write in support of the mandatory labeling of palm oil. In 2008, we travelled to the Malaysian part of Borneo where we were able to see orangutans at a sanctuary run by a non-government organisation. We also saw how the majority of the countryside is now home to palm oil plantations. We have since read up on the issue and are aware that the rampant cultivation is destroying the orangutan's habitat at an alarming rate.

The United Nations has warned that orangutans could be extinct within a generation if we don't act quickly. We cannot wait until these magnificent creatures are on the verge of extinction before we act on the issue of palm oil.

We know that palm oil is found in about 40% of the food products on our shelves. It is essential that our food products are labelled so that consumers can drive a market for proper certified sustainable palm oil because they can demand it of manufacturers. We need only look at the campaigns to bring about dolphin safe tuna products in the 1980s and 1990s to know this.

We think people need to know whether the food they are choosing off the shelf contains palm oil both for its devastating effects on orangutan populations and for the adverse health impacts of consuming food products made with palm oil.

It is also clear during our visit to Borneo in 2008 that palm oil has brought much needed wealth and jobs to the area. We want to see proper certified sustainable palm oil produced so that the wealth can continue without endangering orangutans.

We understand the Bill will be considered by the Senate Committee on Community Affairs in May. We strongly urge all Members of Parliament to pass the bill and help Australian consumers make an informed choice.

Yours Sincerely,

Leanne Copping and Steve Harvey