

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the proposed bill, Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling – Palm Oil) Bill 2009.

Mandatory labelling of palm oil is critical, not only in protecting the rights of consumer here in Australia, but also in alleviating many of the environmental and social and ethical injustices happening overseas.

Destruction of these rainforests, rich in biodiversity, home to unique and endangered plants and animals, as well as human communities is happening faster than anywhere else in the world, and is causing South East Asia to be one of the largest contributors of CO₂. Labelling palm oil will expose manufacturers and allow consumers to drive a market for certified sustainable palm oil. An increase in the production of sustainable palm oil will then decrease the need for expanses of natural rainforest and local communities to be destroyed. Growing certified sustainable palm oil would also mean tougher regulations and monitoring of the processes, giving plantation workers a fairer deal with pay and work conditions.

As a consumer, I have long been aware of the issues surrounding palm oil in foods and the constraints that are placed against me by unfair labelling laws. Australian consumers have the right to know what is in the foods they are purchasing and to make ethical choices where they deem necessary. Currently, it is almost impossible to gauge if my choices are contributing to the issues surrounding the production of palm oil.

Government needs to take this opportunity to act now before we lose one of the most unique biodiversity hotspots on earth. It is up to us as a developed nation to lead the way and make it mandatory to label palm oil on all food products now to ensure a sustainable future for all.

Regards,

Ben Sanders