

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to make a submission in support of the proposed bill: Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling Palm Oil) Bill 2009. On a personal note, as a consumer I believe that I have the right to decide which products are in the food that I purchase, particularly if the ingredients are having an extremely negative impact on Orang-utans or other wildlife.

While on a professional note as a Primatologist who works with Great Apes in range countries, I strongly believe that the Australian government has a duty to ensure all products which can cause harm to any animal or environment be labelled so that consumers can make their own informed choices. If this bill is passed I believe that the food industry will endeavour to source an alternate ingredient which is environmentally sound.

Having worked for two years in the Democratic Republic of Congo and hearing the possibility of the devastating practice of Palm Oil farming reaching this area I am very scared. The DRC and its wildlife have already had an enormous share of exploitation at the cost of wildlife and people. And if this farming practice takes hold there, the wildlife and environment will no doubt be unable to recover – similar to the situation in Indonesia.

The labelling of Palm Oil in developing countries such as Australia can allow the public to make a choice about what they consume and to limit their own impact on the environment.

Many thanks for the opportunity to be able to speak out about this very important issue.

Andrea Edwards