

Janelle Tuero
Borneo Orangutan Survival
Australian Orangutan Project

Dear Sir/ Madam Speaker

Re; "Food Standards Amendment" (Truth in Labeling-Palm Oil) Bill 2009

I am writing in regards to supporting the Amendment Bill or "Truth in Labeling" of Palm Oil. The main points are the following issues for the consideration by the committee in relation to this matter;

- 1. The rights of consumers to be provided with accurate and truthful information to enable them to make an informed choice about the food products they are eating and purchasing.*
- 2. That allowing Palm oil to be listed as "vegetable oil" on food packaging is misleading to consumers.*
- 3. That the impact of Palm Oil production on Wildlife, specifically Orangutans in South East Asia is significant unless it is done sustainably;*
- 4. That sustainable Palm Oil can be produced with low impact on the environment and wildlife and with better labor laws on plantations;*
- 5. That manufacturers should be encouraged to use Sustainable Palm Oil in the production process and can subsequently use the status of "Certified Sustainable Palm Oil" as a business benefit*

Since approximately 2005 I have been actively involved in a voluntary manner by raising awareness of the rainforest destruction and the plight of orangutans by visiting schools, public awareness talks, radio interviews and fund raising to help in the rescue and rehabilitation of orphaned Orangutans. This is a direct result of their habitat loss through massive land clearing, and or slashes and burn operations by Palm Oil operators resulting in significant loss of key habitat for the wild Orangutans.

Solutions in helping reduce this threat is; the transparent labeling of products containing Palm Oil. As a result in this happening, it would allow consumers to make an ethical choice as to whether to purchase a product containing Palm oil.

There is no question or doubt that the clearing of forests for Palm Oil production is the key threat to the Orangutans overall species survival in the wild. With 90% of habitat loss, we as humans owe it to all Rainforest Dwellers to allow them to live as Nature intended. To be as bold as to recommend to the Committee to consider further options for restricting the import of Palm oil extending to rainforest timber would be beneficial to all habitants of the forests.

Whilst it has to be acknowledged that previous and present Australian Governments have contributed financially to the Indonesian Government, under the most recent attempt at forest preservation A\$30million has been allocated, under the “ Sumartran Forest Carbon Partnership” sadly this will not necessarily be translated into restriction of said destruction across South East Asia due to land clearing, as previous attempts have failed to stem this destruction. Still this would be an expectable next step to support forest protection initiatives.

In May 2010, I will be travelling to Sarawak in Borneo in support of Orangutan Conservation efforts. I would be more than willing to share with the committee in person further details of the environmental impact as a result of Palm oil production.

Please note that you have my permission for this submission to be made public.

Regards

Mrs. Janelle Tuero