

Dear Secretary,

I would like to provide my support to the Inquiry into Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling - Palm Oil) Bill 2009. As an Environmental Advisor (B. Sci, Environmental Management) who has completed environmental research studies in Borneo, both in Sabah and Sarawak and has seen first hand what the destruction of natural habitat has done to a number of endemic species to the region, in particular the Orang Utan, I am in full support of this Bill. Consumers should be given clearer labelling in all food packaging, to enable them to make informed decisions in the products they support. By clearly labelling those products containing Palm Oil and by-products of the oil, consumers are given the ability to support their conservation beliefs and avoid purchasing products that contain Palm Oil from unsustainable farming practices in areas of natural Orang Utan habitat.

I have been on two separate trips to Borneo and have both times witnessed the diminishing habitat of the Orang Utan, Proboscus Monkey, Pigmy Elephant and various bird life in the regions I have visited and studied. The flow on effects of the removal of rainforest extends beyond that of the habitat of these keystone species, and will have greater ecological impacts over time. Already it is visible along the vast areas of plantation adjacent to the Kinabatangan River the effects of erosion and sedimentation along the banks of this vital water channel.

Please if I can provide any additional support in an attempt to have this Bill passed to ensure Palm Oil is clearly labeled when present in products, I will be happy to assist. My details are provided below;

Please consider the long term effects of such unsustainable methods of harvesting Palm Oil from these plantations, and let us act before it is too late to make a difference.

Regards,
Sarah Thomas
Environmental Advisor