



# INDIA GREENS PARTY

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## **Press Statement**

### **IGP asks EAC to not grant extension of environment clearance to Kashang Hydropower Project in Himachal**

**New Delhi, 15 May 2020:** The India Greens Party (IGP) has appealed to the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to not grant extension of environment clearance to the Integrated Kashang Hydropower project in the ecologically fragile tribal Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh.

In a petition sent through email to the Chairperson of the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) on 15 May 2020, the IGP President Suresh Nautiyal reminded the committee that the grant of environmental clearance given by the MoEFCC with the condition of 10-year validity was expired already on 10 April 2010 and it would be a violation if extension of environment clearance to the project was granted.

“The 10-year validity of the grant has already been expired and till now only State I has been executed. The IGP requests the EAC to not extend the validity of the clearance,” said Mr Nautiyal.

As per the April 2010 clearance, the Stages II, III and IV of the project were to be constructed on the same mountain despite massive opposition from the local tribal population on the grounds that these will spell doom for their lives, livelihoods and biodiversity.

He said the efforts of the Himachal Pradesh Hydropower Corporation Limited to get an extension of the validity of the environment clearance from the EAC was an anti-people exercise.

“It is clear that the Kashang Project has almost no economic benefits. Instead, it has huge ecological, livelihood and social costs,” the IGP leader pointed out, adding that the project will be an invitation to more disasters in the fragile Himalaya if allowed to ahead.

Mr Nautiyal said the issue is due to be discussed on 15 May 2020.

The IGP President said that there was non-compliance of safety and environmental laws by HPPCL in Stage I and the lack of safety compliance and non-accountability has meant that the costs of the damages to fields, farms, forests and human lives are borne by the people

He said the project was to be commissioned in 2015 but so far only Stage 1 is complete and there have been massive cost overruns in the first phase itself. A CAG report has slammed the HPPCL for initiating work without approval from the Gram Sbha and increasing the financial risk to the project.

“There are also threats to local ecology, floral and faunal biodiversity. The project falls in the Lippa Asrang Wildlife Sanctuary home to the Himalayan Brown Bear and endangered Snow leopard, and the eco-sensitive zone is also rich in floral biodiversity,” Mr Nautiyal stated.

He said the threat to local tribal livelihoods and land based economy was also imminent as more than 1000 families in eight villages of this tribal area will be impacted as their livelihoods are completely dependent on commercial horticulture and farming of peas, potatoes, rajma, etc. Also, they depend on forest produce like Chilgoza pines and kala jeera which will also be impacted as a result of the project.

The IGP President said there was violation of the Forest Rights Act and tribal laws during execution of the State I. “The NGT in 2016 had ordered that the individual and community Rights of one of the main affected villages, Lippa, be settled and consent be sought from the Gram Sabha for the project. This is still pending and a case is ongoing in the High Court on the same. Being a schedule V area this is also a violation of the PESA 1996,” hhe pointed out.

Mr Nautiyal said the underground blasting and tunneling for hydropower projects disturb the local geology and soil erosion triggering slope failures exacerbating landslides in an area already hazard and disaster prone, and leading to diversion of aquifers.

***-Press Statement issued in New Delhi by the IGP Spokesperson Rehana Siddiqui.***