



INDIA GREENS PARTY

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Press Statement

IGP requests Environment Minister to withdraw draft EIA-2020 as it does not acknowledge best world practices

Onchar-Pauri, Garhwal, Uttarakhand, 12 August 2020: The India Greens Party (IGP) has requested Mr Prakash Javadekar, Minister of Environment Forests and Climate Change, to withdraw the draft Environment Impact Assessment-2020 or EIA-2020 as it does not acknowledge the best global practices.

“We, the members of the IGP and the people of India, therefore, reject this draft EIA-2020 as a potential law of India,” said the IGP President Suresh Nautiyal in an email communication to Mr Javadekar on 12 August 2020.

“The draft does not acknowledge the best practices in EIA from across the world. Many countries have EIAs that are implemented at the sectoral (power or transport), strategic (energy transition) and crosscutting (health and biodiversity) scale for greater effectiveness and better environmental governance. But, your draft is regressive because it aims at approving projects more than assessing them. This kind of law is the reason why India remains unprogressive,” Mr Nautiyal pointed out in his email to the Minister.

“It is unacceptable that the people of this country are not allowed to speak about the projects that are imposed on their neighbourhoods, their coasts and forests,” he added.

The IGP leader said the draft EIA 2020 proposed by the Ministry clearly reflects the fear of public participation in the central government. The draft gives impunity to so many projects from public hearings that it makes us think if these projects are for the good of a select few.

The Covid pandemic lockdown has shown us how unequal our society is. The poorest people of our country and the communities that live in forest areas, coastal regions and the mountains, rely on environmental resources to survive. There are enough studies to show that nature thrives only when environmental communities are safe and prosperous. We demand

that the government must draft laws that enable marginalised communities to prosper and be able to conduct practices that sustain their livelihoods. The government must do away with EIA dilutions that entrust our valuable natural resources to private industries.

The central government has done so little to combat climate change, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss even after the responsibility bestowed upon us by the Paris Climate Change Agreement. If we do not change our approach to the environment, the future generations of India will suffer the most. This government, which is mostly made up of seniors, may not foresee the next few decades while planning, but as parents and young people, we do. Therefore we are morally bound to demand the Ministry to withdraw the EIA 2020 and replace it with a progressive law that promotes sustainability and combats climate change.

The covid-19 pandemic has taught the world a very important lesson. We must focus on the long term health of people rather than making short term environmentally downgraded decisions. We demand that the central government and the environment ministry stop ignoring the voices from across the country and fulfil our educated demands. The world has already changed forever. It's high time we adapt to the rules.

Mr Nautiyal reminded the Minister that the party on 19 April 2020 had objected to the stipulated time-frame for finalising the EIA-2020 draft of the Ministry in the light of COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

-IGP Press Statement issued by Secretary-General Rehana Siddiqui.