

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 28
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29.11.2021

Changes in Forest Conservation Act

28. SHRI V.K. SREEKANDAN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Government is considering making changes to the existing Forest Conservation Act;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is also true that the agencies involved in national security projects and border infrastructure projects obtain prior forest clearance from the Government;
- (d) whether it is also a fact that the Government is considering adding clauses concerning punishments and for penal compensation; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) & (b) Based on concerns and suggestions received from State Governments, Union territories, Union Ministries and various organizations, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change had sought comments of the State Governments, Union territory Administrations and other stakeholders by circulating a Public Consultation Paper. Besides in Hindi and English languages, the consultation paper was placed in public domain in vernacular languages also. The paper invites views, comments and suggestions from various stakeholders including the State Governments and Union territory Administrations, with a view to strengthen the efforts of forest conservation and to make the implementation of the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 more effective.

The Public Consultation Paper was placed in the public domain for one month seeking comments of all stakeholders.

The Ministry has also written to the Chief Ministers of the State Governments, Administrators/Lt. Governors of the Union territories and Chief

Secretaries of the States and UTs requesting to send comments of their respective Governments/administrations. More than 5600 comments were received in the Ministry from various stakeholders, including those in vernacular languages.

(c) The diversion of forest land for all non-forestry purposes including the national security and border infrastructure projects, requires the prior approval of the Central Government under the provisions of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

(d) & (e) The Ministry is considering to make the punishment more stringent to discourage the offences under the Act. From the present provision of 15 days of imprisonment in the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, it has been proposed to enhance the same to 3 months.
