

No. C5-5392/2016

Office of the Chief Conservator of Forests
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Date : 19/02/2019

From

Chief Conservator of Forests
High Range Circle, Kottayam.

To

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Forest, Land & Resources) &
Nodal Officer F(C) Act and CAMPA
Thiruvananthapuram.

Sir

Sub :- Joint Inspection of site for Keezharkuthu Small Hydro Electric
Project on 17/11/2018 - reg.

Ref :- 1. Letter No. FC2-4490/18 dated 16/08/18.
2. Letter from Keezharkuthu Power Pvt. Ltd. dated 02/02/19
(copy enclosed).

As instructed vide reference (1), the joint inspection of the site for
Keezharkuthu Small Hydro Electric Project was carried out on 17/11/18, the
following official members were present.

1	Mr. Deepak Mishra IFS	Chief Conservator of Forests, High Range Circle, Kottayam
2	Mr. S. Unnikrishnan IFS	Divisional Forest Officer Kothamangalam
3	Mr. Gopakumaran Nair	Joint Secretary to Govt. Power Department
4	Mr. M. K. Parameswaran Nair	Technical Committee Member of Kerala Govt. for SHP
5	Mr. G. Anil	Joint Director Energy Management Centre

6	Mr. Dineshkumar	Energy Technologist Energy Management Centre
7	Mr. Ajith	Executive Engineers Kerala State Electricity Board
8	Mr. Onkar Singh	Managing Director Keezharkuthu Power Pvt. Ltd.
9	Mr. Jasbir Singh	Joint Managing Director Keezharkuthu Power Pvt. Ltd.
10	Dr. Shaji	Environmental Specialist Agricultural & Eco System Management Centre Thiruvananthapuram

The committee members assembled at Velloor Forest Station and preliminary discussion about the project was done. The Chief Project Manager, Keezharkuthu Power Project explained about the project and informed that initial requirement of forest areas required for the project is 2.87 ha and later on 1.89 ha will be handed over back to forest department after the construction of the project. During the joint inspection of the site on 17/11/9, the concerns of the department was informed to project proponent and officials of Power Department, Energy Management Centre and KSEB. These concerns are as follows :-

1. The project site is situated in the interior part of Reserve Forest (part of Thodupuzha Reserved Forest). The forests are having natural vegetation having semi-evergreen to evergreen in nature. The area is one of the few remaining patches of natural forests in Thodupuzha Range. The requirement of the area as per revised proposal submitted by company vide reference (2) is shown as below :-

Sl. No.	Project Component	Legal requirement
	Weir	0.30
	Tunnel in take	0.08
	Weir submersible area	0.50
	Working area I	0.09

	Power tunnel	0.48
	Surge shaft	0.18
	Working area II	0.09
	Penstock & rail track	0.70
Total		2.42 Ha

However, the impact of the project on the forest is likely to be higher. The construction work will have adverse impacts on the vegetation at least during the period of the construction. Digging soil and rocks for power tunnel, surge tank, penstock pipe etc. will cause damage to nearby vegetation. The adverse impact on forest area will be substantially higher than what is projected by the project authorities, although majority of the impact on surrounding area will be only during the construction period.

2. The project site is deep inside the forest area and is approachable by a fair weather road from Kottakavala to Kaithapara (8 km.) and thereafter a treckpath of around 800 M- 1 Km. The diversion proposal had not included the repairs or renovation of the road from Kottakavala to Kaithapara Settlement. When this was pointed out to project proponent, they have replied that no major repair will be undertake on this road. It must be pointed out that the same road is forest road and therefore no repair whether major or minor can be carried unless prior sanction for diversion is obtained. During construction, the movement of heavy vehicles is expected and the present condition of the road is not good enough to the facilitate the movement of heavy vehicles on the road.
3. During the inspection, it was pointed out to the project proponents and other officials that the terrain is very steep and proposal for formation of approach road from Kaithapara to Wier Site is not practical and the work will be cause large destruction to adjacent forest area. The new road is to be laid along the existing treckpath and this will cause landslides and debris flow during the heavy rains. However, the project proponents

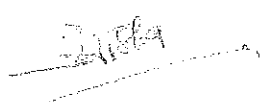
have now deleted the formation of the approach road by substituting a temporary ropeway with steel towers at required intervals. No assessment of forest area required for this work has been assessed and included in the revised proposal submitted in this office.

4. The project site is part of Anamudy Elephant Reserve. The Keezhar is a perennial stream and the evergreen forest patch is one of the few remaining natural forest patches in Thodupuzha Range. In the summer months, the project site is frequented by elephants and other wildlife for water. During construction, disturbance will be caused in the area and elephants and other wildlife may enter the nearby habitation and depredation.
5. The project site is located in semi evergreen patch of forest surrounded by teak plantations and habitations. As such the area is ecologically fragile and disturbance is expected to this eco system at least during the construction.

The above facts are submitted for favour of kind information and for further necessary action.

Encl : Ref.(2)

Yours faithfully,


Chief Conservator of Forests

- Copy to : Joint Secretary to Government, Power Department, Government Secretariat, Thiruvananthapuram
- Copy to : The Director, Keezharkuthu Power Pvt. Ltd., MCP Associate Building, PP/III/574, Opp: St. Peter's College, PD/11, Kolenchery, Ernakulam for information.