

F. No. 7-5/2020-PE
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Project Elephant Division)

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Aliganj, Jor Bagh Road,
New Delhi-110003
Dated 25th June, 2021

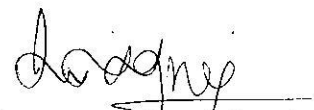
OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Proposal for diversion of 783.275 ha of forest land consisting of 643.095 ha of RF in Chhendipada & Kankurupal Reserved Forest and 140.180 ha of Village Forest land in Chhendipada Range of Angul Division for Naini Coal Block (Open Cast) under Angul District, Odisha of M/s Singareni Collieries Company Ltd.

Sir,

With reference to your letter No. 8-01/2020-FC dated 1st March, 2021 regarding the subject cited above the comments in respect of Project Elephant are enclosed for your needful action.

Encl: As above



(Dr. K. Muthamizh Selvan)
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To
Shri Charan Jeet Singh
Scientist 'D' FC Division,
MoEF&CC

Comments from the Project Elephants

1. In this regard, a letter was sent to CWW, Odisha on 17th March 2021, for seeking comments on the status of elephant habitats and movement of elephants in the proposed diversion. A comment of the State Forest Department of Odisha **(enclosed as Annexure I)**.
2. Odisha FD reports states that "Elephant rich Angul Forest Division has witnessed many man animal conflict due to fragmentation dense forest owing to mining, industrialization and urbanization. No mitigative measures are fool proof enough to guarantee Zero causality to wild animals and collateral damage to human life and property"
3. The DFO Angul Division in his site inspection report stated that movement of elephants in northern and southern part of lease area apprehending man elephant conflicts in adjoin villages **(enclosed as Annexure II)**.
4. Mitigative plan as suggested vide letter no 5850 dated 16th July 2020 by the Forest Department, Odisha, it would appropriate to conduct a long term study and prepare a long-term comprehensive human elephant management plan.
5. As per the DSS report, Kahneijena –Anantapur Elephant Corridor is in close proximity to the proposed project **(enclosed as Annexure III)**.
6. As per the elephant population estimation (2017), the State of Odisha has the highest number with 1976 elephants (63%) in the East Central region. The State of Odisha has very high Human Elephant Conflict with 920 human beings and 227 elephants were killed due to human elephant conflicts in the State of Odisha from 2009 to 2020.
7. The Task Force Report (2010) also states that mining, especially open cast mining has dealt a severe blow to elephant conservation in the country, especially in Central India where most of elephant areas in Singhbhum, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Denkanal, Angul and Phulbani have been severely fragmented leading to increased HEC and movement to adjoining states of Chhattisgarh and West Bengal.
8. The Task Force also recommended that the mining leases in Elephant Reserve should be reviewed. In areas that are not Elephant Reserve but used by Elephants, leases should be viewed with elephant conservation and corridor requirement point of view.
9. Considering the above facts, the proposed mining activities may lead to further escalation of the Human Elephant Conflicts in the area and region and endanger the lives of people and elephants in the area. Hence FC Division of Competent Authority may appraise

all these facts related to area, especially the elephant habitat, Human Elephant conflict Status, elephant movements in the area & nearby location of an important elephant corridor & possibility of further escalation of the human elephant conflict in the area, the Hon'ble Supreme court, NGT decision related to securing corridor etc, take a well-considered decision in the Proposal for diversion of 783.275 ha of forest land to Naini Coal Block (Open Cast) under Angul District, Odisha of M/s Singareni Collieries Company.