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# Eco sensitive zone: Kerala assembly passes resolution

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The assembly on Thursday passed a resolution on the eco sensitive zone (ESZ) demanding that the Centre exclude inhabited areas, agriculture fields and public organizations from the ambit of the eco sensitive zones while issuing the final notification. The resolution moved by forest minister A K Saseendran says that the Centre should consider the proposals submitted by the state while issuing the final notification and take necessary steps if required, including legal measures, or framing of law in this regard. It pointed out that the Supreme Court order, if implemented, would seriously affect public life. If the eco sensitive zones are notified in that manner as it is now, there will also be practical difficulty in implementing it in the state, it said.

About 30% of land in the state is forest land, while 48% comprises the Western Ghats, lakes, backwaters, paddy land and wetland. The population density of the state is more than 900 per square km, and the present population is 3.5 crore.

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Hence, there is very little land available in the state. The proposal of the state that inhabited areas should completely be excluded from the ambit of eco-sensitive zones was under the consideration of the Centre, when the Supreme Court order was pronounced, the resolution said.

The resolution has come at a time when the government had to go on the backfoot, over the order that was issued by it in 2019. As per the government order issued on October 31, 2019, the government had given its clearance to issue a draft notification regarding eco-sensitive zones ranging from zero to one km around wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, including human inhabited areas.