

Goa govt tables bill for single state-level tree authority

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Figure 1Goa government claimed that the bill seeks to ensure a holistic approach with a single apex authority at the State level for effective guidance and supervision for protection and conservation of trees in Goa.

The Goa government on Monday tabled a bill in the state assembly that seeks to amend the Goa Preservation of Trees Act, 1987, for a single state-level tree authority to replace those at the district level. The bill proposes the authority will be in an advisory capacity and no longer be tasked with conducting tree census. It says it will have to only “maintain a record of tree cover outside forests based on the report of the Forest Survey of India”.

The district-level authorities were responsible for “the preservation of all trees within its jurisdiction”. The state-level authority will now only be “advising the government and all concerned for preservation of all trees within its jurisdiction.”

“The Bill seeks... to ensure [a] holistic approach with a single apex authority at the State level for effective guidance and supervision for protection and conservation of trees in Goa,” the government said in the statement. “The proposed Authority shall act as a principal advisory [body] to the government for protection, preservation and conservation of trees covered under the Act.

The state has two authorities for each district. The bill proposes to have the principal secretary (forests) chair the authority. The government said the authority will be strengthened “with additional senior level members including the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, the Chief Wildlife Warden, the Member Secretary of the State Biodiversity Board to ensure larger stakeholder participation.”

The bill was tabled after the Living Heritage Foundation, an NGO, expressed reservations about the feasibility of census of trees in the state given the complexity involved.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/goa-govt-tables-bill-for-single-state-level-tree-authority-101634628097737.html>