

## Proposed forest (conservation) act prompts calls for amendment

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The Centre has proposed an amendment to the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, to liberalise forest laws. The amendment proposed by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) also puts in place stringent norms for forest conservation by increasing penal provisions for offenses and maintaining “pristine forests” where no non-forestry activity will be allowed under any circumstances.

The ministry sent all states a copy of the proposed amendments on October 2, seeking their objections and suggestions till November 1.

The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, is one of the two pillars on which rests the fate of India’s remaining natural habitats.

Bengaluru-based Wildlife First, an organization renowned for its deep understanding of conservation laws, has submitted a set of important suggestions to the government. The suggestions have been attached to a campaign on Conservation India website, a non-profit, non-sponsored portal.

There is a provision in the campaign for those who broadly agree with the suggestions on the portal and don’t have either the time or the legal knowledge to submit their own original comments and suggestions on the amendments to the FC Act, to just add their signature to the campaign. There’s a cover letter attached on the campaign page to be forwarded to the top official in the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change. The set of important suggestions to the government are attached in the form of a PDF here on the campaign page.

All signatures will be collated and sent / emailed as part of a Conservation India memo to Shri Sandeep Sharma, IFS, Assistant Inspector General of Forests, Forest Conservation, Division Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change at [fca-amendment@gov.in](mailto:fca-amendment@gov.in).

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