

To,  
The Chief Wildlife Warden  
Member Secretary  
Wildlife Advisory Board  
Govt. of Goa

**Sub: The meeting held on Dec 02, 2019 and the agenda therein**

Sir,

We, the undersigned members of the Wildlife Advisory Board, would like to bring to your notice our concerns with regards to the above mentioned subject.

1. The notes on the agenda of the meeting were handed over at the start of the meeting, giving us no or little time to understand the projects that had come for approval and their merits/demerits. Further, no copies of the impact studies were circulated for us to take any informed decision in these matters.
2. We would have appreciated if the projects were presented by the proponents instead of the Forest Department, since it sent a wrong signal to everyone.
3. We are concerned with the way the meeting was conducted with hardly any formal structured discussion or debate on serious issues, cross speaking by members, no chance for everyone to speak and a haste to get over with the agenda.
4. It was also noted that all the points on agenda were pertaining to one PA, i.e. the Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park. The three proposed linear projects will further fragment the already fragmented PA. A total of 216 ha. of forests is sought to be diverted for these projects, most of which is pristine and virgin in nature. While the provided notes spoke of individual projects and the forest to be diverted, the impact of these projects, especially the cumulative impact on biodiversity does not find mention. e.g. what would be the impact of the high tension wires passing over the Tambdi-Surla stream on large birds like raptors, hornbills that use these open areas to fly? Are we aware that for a species of dragonfly described in 2012, *Idionyx gomantakensis*, Collem happens to be the type locality and the species hasn't been sighted anywhere else in the State. The double-tracking will destroy this only known locality and we could be responsible for the fastest local extinction of a species.
5. Further, we are all aware that the railways and road projects are part of the larger scheme of things and will have an impact on wildlife throughout the stretch since wildlife exists beyond the boundaries of the PA's. The latest case of the leopard road kill happened in Khandepar far away from any protected area. As the State Board for Wildlife we need to demand for an assessment of the cumulative impact of these linear development happening throughout the State.
6. Many questions have remained unanswered on these projects. Proposed mitigation measures, except the overpasses and underpasses, were not discussed in the meeting.
  - a. Compensatory afforestation needs a clear strategy. Random afforestation cannot compensate for loss of virgin tree cover.

- b. How will material be taken to inaccessible areas for the transmission lines without cutting roads through the forest?
- c. What is the alignment of the transmission line?
- d. Is there any restriction of movement of vehicles in the night?
- e. Has any speed limit been specified for the vehicle and train movement? And how will it be monitored?

We request a meeting as soon as possible to discuss the mitigation measures and their implementation in detail.

7. Having said all of the above, it disturbs us to see that the Govt. is pushing these projects in public interest through PA's, while some of the villagers that have been residing in forest areas for generations do not have access to good roads and electricity.
8. Since we gather that the above three projects will be approved by the Board, our request is to minute our objections to the same as well as request to minute objections raised by other members during the meeting.

This letter may kindly not be considered as a complaint but an appeal by citizens who are concerned about the protection and conservation of our natural spaces that are fast dwindling. We all appreciate the work being done by the Forest Department and in our personal capacities have worked and will continue to work with the Department on various fronts.

Thanking you

Yours sincerely,

**Members of the State Wildlife Advisory Board**

1. Goa Bird Conservation Network
2. Vivekanand Environment Awareness Brigade
3. Shri. Rajendra Kerkar
4. Shri. Arnold Noronha
5. Shri. Amrut Singh
6. Shri. Charan Desai