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Native Vegetation Inquiry  
Productivity Commission  
Locked Bag 2, Collins Street East  
MELBOURNE VIC 8003  
Dear Commissioners

**Subject: Draft Report: Impacts of Native Vegetation and Biodiversity Regulations**

I wish to make comment of the Draft Report prepared by the Productivity Commission during its examination of the impacts of Native Vegetation and Biodiversity Regulations. These comments are made on behalf of Gippsland Private Forestry Inc., whose role is to promote sustainable, commercial private forestry development in Gippsland. Gippsland Private Forestry Inc (GPF) lodged a submission to the Inquiry in response to the Issues Paper under our former name of Gippsland Farm Plantations Inc (submission no. 92), and I participated in the public hearing held in Melbourne on 14 August 2003.

GPF commends the Commission on its Draft Report, and believes it to be a balanced and considered assessment of the native vegetation policy regimes with which we are familiar, and of the impacts that have resulted since their introduction.

In particular, GPF fully endorses the Conclusions and draft recommendations of Chapter 9 of the draft report. Your observations and suggestions dealing with the limits of the current regulatory approach; the drivers that influence landowner behaviour; promoting the provision of environmental services; equity and cost-sharing issues; and the need to better understand and describe the environmental benefits that the regulatory regimes are seeking to protect or enhance, have all been very well expressed and are most apt.

The one aspect GPF believes should have received more prominence in the draft report is the implications for landowners who are (or wish to be) engaged in private forestry activities (plantations, harvesting and regeneration of native forest). Whilst most of the submissions to the Inquiry have been related to the implications of native vegetation clearing restraints on "conventional" agricultural enterprises, GPF is of the view that commercial use of private native forest and plantations is a land use that been impacted by native vegetation regulations. Moreover, private forestry is a land use that can be well integrated with other agricultural activities. It can represent a means to retain areas under forest (planted or native) on a property as a productive land use whilst also contributing the various property and catchment wide environmental benefits that forested areas so ably generate.

I would be pleased to discuss this observation further with your staff if necessary.

Again, my congratulations on an excellent draft document.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Willersdorf  
Executive Officer

Promoting sustainable, commercial private forestry development in Gippsland.