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July 23, 2020

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Vijay Lakhani

To
Shri Manu Kumar Srivastava (I.A.S.)
Additional Chief Secretary
Forest (Revenue and Forest Department)
Government of Maharashtra

Sub: Relevant provision / amendment to the law for permitting cultivation and commercial use of trees in Maharashtra

Respected Sir,

The pace of urbanization in affects primarily the available open spaces and in particular the green cover of the Maharashtra. In our State development and economic activities close to urban areas had possibly resulted in the drop in cover.

Needless to mentioned that Green ground cover has several advantages for the environment as well as society. Green ground cover provides a rainwater buffer, purifies the air, reduces the ambient temperature, and encourages biodiversity in the city. Green in the city is part of climate-proof construction. People are happier in a green environment than in grey surroundings. A greener surrounding always adds to the quality of life and to the Ease of Living.

It is a fact that in state of Maharashtra that there could be many plots of land that are underdeveloped for various reasons, and / or are lying vacant today as the land owner may not deem it to be the best of times to develop the plot. However, such lands are fertile Still they are not being cultivated with tress. Because they fear that once these trees are fully grown nobody will allow them to cut the trees and it becomes blockage for the development of land. Which results into collapsing in the commercial value of the said land.

Hence to improve the green cover for the state we would like to submit our below suggestion for your kind consideration.

On such underdeveloped plots or vacant plots of land, should there be a proposal by land owner for voluntary act of cultivation of tress. Untill, when the same plot owner, as & when comes forward with the proposal to develop the plot as per the relevant Development & planning regulation for which he is seeking permission to cut the aforementioned trees. The authority should allow cutting of such trees without any other provision / condition of replantation of the tress being made incidental on the land owner to fulfil, as in the very first instance, when the same person had come forward for cultivation of tress, as it was done with the explicit intention and the clearly specified provision / intent.

Should the above be provided and allowed by the authority, then many plot owners may come forward for voluntary cultivation of trees and lakhs of acers of land will be cultivated with trees. However, in future such lakhs of acres of cultivated land will not come-up for development together. To give an example people have parked their savings in form of fixed deposits to the tune of Lakhs of crores but all people will not be visiting the banks on same day to withdraws this lakhs of crores of deposit. Same way at any particular time only few land proposals will come up for development.

Such explicit change in the provisions should be brought in the relevant law, thereby permitting commercial cultivation of such forest. This would only provide an additional green cover for the state of Maharashtra which is the need of the hour. Similarly, if other states also start adopting this initiative this will result into increase in the green cover for entire nation.

CREDAI-MCHI's PRAYER

- **Provision / amendment to the relevant law for permitting cultivation and commercial use of tress be allowed to the plot owner's**
- Without prejudice, when the same plot owner, as & when comes forward with the proposal to develop the plot as per the relevant Development and planning regulation for which he is seeking permission to cut the aforementioned trees, the same should be allowed without any other provision /condition of replanting the trees being made incidental on the land owner.

Sir, we know you are a visionary and earlier in your past departments in government you have taken such path braking imitative basically a fundamental change in the working of department. Hence we request you to give your best mind and priority to our said suggestion and make it happen.

Thanking you,

Your sincerely,
For CREDAI-MCHI

Nayan A. Shah
President

Bandish Ajmera
Hon. Secretary