

>

Title: Need to form a Tiger Sanctuary surrounding srivilliputhur forest in Tenkasi Lok Sabha Constituency.

SHRI P. LINGAM (TENKASI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, efforts are on to form a Tiger Sanctuary surrounding Srivilliputhur forest division in my Tenkasi Lok Sabha Constituency. For this purpose lakhs of hectares of the reserve forest areas in Virudhunagar District, Sivagiri Taluk forest areas in Tirunelveli District, Madurai District forests and Theni District deep forests are to be clustered and declared as Tiger Sanctuary. They say that the presence of Tigers has been noticed in a recent survey. Already the grazing rights of the poor farmers and the agricultural labour to feed their cattle in the foot hill areas have been taken away there by affecting their livelihood. The local people have been threatened by this proposed announcement to declare that forest area in the western ghats. Lakhs of farmers and agricultural workers are contributing to productive agricultural activities in the western ranges. This area is important as food grains are grown and other essential crops are cultivated here. Apart from that there are drinking water resources and places of tourism importance. People are dependent on that to carry on with their traditional occupation. At this juncture the Government is taking steps to declare these hill areas as wild life sanctuary. This will take away the traditional rights of scheduled tribes or those who live in those hill areas. When this sanctuary is to be formed the traditional rights of people who live in that area must be protected and their demands must be met with. If the entire area is to be declared as Tiger sanctuary may lead to several violations of law and lead to many side effects and criminal acts. Hence I urge upon the Union government and the Forest Department to give up the proposal to declare that area as Reserve Forest Area.

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil