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Title: Need to amend section 5 of Environment Protection Act, 1986 for the benefit of people residing in Ecologically Sensitive Areas in Kerala.

ADV. JOICE GEORGE (IDUKKI): After considering the recommendations of Kasturirangan report on Western Ghats, Government had notified 123 villages as Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA), comprising 13108 sq. km. in Kerala as per the directions under section 5 of Environment Protection Act 1986 on November 13, 2013. As per the recommendations of the expert panel appointed by the State Government, the extend of ESA is confined only to 9993.7sqkm excluding the agricultural lands, plantations and residential areas. The draft notifications issued on 10th March 2014, 4th September 2015 and 28th February 2017 have incorporated the State expert panel's recommendations. Recently the State Government of Kerala has requested to amend the section 5 directions to restrict the regulations confining only to areas specified in the draft notification. Hence I urge upon the government to amend the section 5 directions as per the request from the State Government to safeguard the hopes and aspirations of people living across the ESAs.