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The Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr Swinbourn

PETITION 024 – OPPOSE LOGGING IN NANNUP

The Forest Industries Federation of WA (FIFWA) is the industry association for the timber industry in Western Australia. Our membership includes all the major companies and businesses that operate in the WA timber industry, including commercial plantation growers and managers, harvest and haulage operators, and timber processors in both the plantation and native timber industry sectors.

The timber industry in WA is worth \$1.4 billion per annum and employs directly and indirectly around 6,000 people, mostly in regional WA¹. The scale of the industry exceeds the value of a number of other primary industries in WA. \$1.4 billion is about the equivalent value of the beef and fisheries industries combined.

The native forest sector is a key contributor to the wealth and employment generated by the industry as a whole. In 2017 alone, more than 500 jobs were directly attributable to the native forest industry. The native forest sector also generated \$220 million in 2015-16¹. Significantly, the native forest sector is based entirely on regrowth forests, and less than 1% of the forest estate is available for harvest in any one year.

Petition 024 seeks to exempt Barrabup 03 coupe from timber harvesting for various reasons, which when examined, do not sustain a compelling argument.

All of the reasons cited in the petition for exempting timber harvesting can be readily accommodated through normal forestry coupe planning. It's noteworthy that the Forest Products Commission (FPC) was involved in seeking a review of the old-growth status of the coupe, which determined a small area meets the definition of old-growth forest which is now excluded from timber harvesting.

¹ Socio-economic impacts of the forest industry – Western Australia. Jacki Schirmer et al, University of Canberra & Econsearch, December 2017

An irony of this petition is the fact that forest health declines when forest management activities cease. Ecological outcomes are woven into our state's comprehensively prepared Forest Management Plan 2014-2023 and include strategies like sustainable thinning of over-stocked forest areas in response to climate change. The timber industry also boosts the state's capacity to protect forests and communities from catastrophic bushfires. Carbon stored in trees continues to be stored for the life of the timber product. Conversely, when forests are not sustainably managed, all trees that die simply release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere as they decompose. Indeed trees are more likely to die while competing for resources in an unmanaged forest.

The notion underpinning the petition, that timber harvesting is incompatible with other uses of forests, is not sustained by evidence. Tourism and recreation are entirely compatible with ecologically sustainable forest management implemented in Western Australia.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you and your committee with this input.

Yours sincerely

Matt Granger
Chief Executive Officer (Acting)