To

The Principal Secretary (Forests)
All State/Union Territory Governments

Sub: Guidelines for diversion of forest land for non-forest purpose under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980- Simplified procedure for grant of permission for felling of trees standing on forest land to be diverted for execution of linear projects: reg.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to guidelines on the afore-mentioned subject issued by this Ministry vide letters of even number dated 8th August 2014 and 15th January 2015 on the above-mentioned subject wherein this Ministry communicated a simplified procedure for grant of permission for tree cutting and commencement of work of linear project in forest land, and to say that the said guidelines were examined by the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT) in the Original Application No. 52 of 2015 in the matter of Milind Pariwakam & Anr. versus Union of India.

2. The Hon'ble NGT in their order dated 13th March 2015 disposed of the said O.A. by issuing certain directions.

3. In compliance of directions issued by the Hon'ble NGT in the said O.A. and in supersession of this Ministry's said letters/guidelines of even number dated 8th August 2014 and 15th January 2015, I am directed to say as below:

(i) With a view to facilitate speedy execution of projects involving linear diversion of forest land such as laying of new roads, widening of existing highways, transmission lines, water supply lines, optic fiber cabling, railway lines etc., in-principle approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 (FC Act) issued by the Central Government may be deemed as the working permission for tree cutting and commencement of work, if the required funds for compensatory afforestation, net present value (NPV), wildlife conservation plan, plantation of dwarf species of medicinal plants, and all such other compensatory levies specified in the in-principle approval are realised from the user agency and where necessary, for compensatory afforestation, transfer and mutation of non-forest/revenue forest land in favour of State Forest Department is affected;

(ii) After the afore-mentioned compensatory levies specified in the in-principle approval are realised from the user agency and where necessary, for compensatory afforestation, transfer and mutation of non-forest/revenue forest land in favour of State Forest Department is affected, the State Government or a Senior Officer not below the Rank of a Divisional Forest Officer, having jurisdiction over the forest land
2. The Secretary (Coordination), Cabinet Secretariat, Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi.
3. Secretary, Ministry of Power, Government of India, Shram Shakti Bhawan, New Delhi.
4. Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.
5. Chairman, Railways Board, Rail Bhawan, New Delhi.
6. Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India, Transport Bhawan, New Delhi.
7. Director General, Border Roads Organization, New Delhi.
8. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, all States/UTs.
10. All Regional Offices, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India (GoI).
11. Joint Secretary in-charge, Impact Assessment Division, MoEFCC, GoI.
12. All Assistant Inspector General of Forests/ Directors in the Forest Conservation Division, MoEFCC, GoI.
13. Director, Regional Offices Headquarters Division, MoEFCC, GoI.
14. Sr. Director (Technical), NIC, MoEFCC, GoI with a request to place a copy of this letter on website of this Ministry.
15. Sr. PPS to the Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, GoI.
16. Sr. PPS to the Director General of Forests & Special Secretary, MoEFCC, GoI.
17. Sr. PPS to the Addl. Director General of Forests (Forest Conservation), MoEFCC, GoI.
18. PS to the Inspector General of Forests (Forest Conservation), MoEFCC, GoI.
19. Guard File.

(H.C. Chaudhary)
Director