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The Hon Daniel Andrews MP  
Office of the Premier  
1 Treasury Place  
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Dear Premier

In the wake of the devastating bushfires that have ravaged parts of Victoria this summer, and the interim injunction granted by the Supreme Court on 29 January 2020 preventing logging in 3 coupes, Lawyers for Forests Inc is calling for an immediate ban on all native forest logging in Victoria.

The full extent of the devastation to habitat and populations of native fauna and flora caused by the bushfires remains unknown. However, experts are predicting threatened and endangered species will be pushed further to the brink of extinction and that some species may already have been driven to extinction. A prominent example is Martin's Creek in far East Gippsland, one of the largest areas of warm temperate rainforest in Victoria. It was a refuge and home for threatened species including the Spiny crayfish and Slender tree-fern. Tragically, this area has been completely wiped out and we won't see its recovery in our lifetime. Over 70% of warm temperate rainforest is estimated to have been lost in the fires. Cool temperate rainforests in the ancient Kuark forest and beautiful old stands of wet and damp forests in the Errinundra Valley are also gone.

In apparent disregard of these impacts and of the Precautionary Principle, VicForests has continued to authorise native forest logging in some of the last remaining refugia for threatened species, such as in the forests of the Central Highlands. These are some of the last known pockets of native forest in which threatened species have viable habitat, including the Leadbeaters possum and Greater glider.

Clear fell logging of native forests creates conditions that increase the severity and frequency of bushfires by wiping out the wet understory and tree canopies. The resulting landscape is quickly replaced by a monoculture of young eucalypts, which are far more water intensive and flammable than old, mature native forests.

Your government's announcement in November 2019 to end all native forest logging in Victoria by 2030 was a welcome announcement. But given that much of the high conservation value forest, threatened species and plantation timber stands in East Gippsland have now been decimated by the bushfires of 2019/2020, Lawyers for Forests is calling on you to announce an immediate ban on all native forest logging in Victoria, to appropriately compensate and re-skill forestry workers and to shift the industry into the plantation industry which is predominantly located in Western Victoria and has ample stock of plantation native timber currently unaffected by the bushfires. Your government must show leadership and rapidly transition the industry as part of the emergency bushfire response.



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You acknowledged in 2019 that a big fire event could wipe out Victoria's logging industry. That catastrophic event has happened. There are still months of bushfire risk ahead, and the fires have already taken out so much of Victoria's precious and unique flora and fauna. It's crucial that all remaining unburnt and green forests are preserved. This will not only ensure our wildlife is given a chance to recover but allows areas to regenerate.

While fires still burn in East Gippsland, the logging industry is lobbying to "salvage" log the burnt areas of forest. This will be a disaster if it goes ahead as such logging places further stress on forests and wildlife that, if left alone, could recover and regenerate from the fires. Salvage logging removes any chance of the original forest regenerating from the existing root stock. Accordingly, Lawyers for Forests calls upon the Victorian Government to resist the recent calls by the forestry industry to "salvage" saw and pulp logs from bushfire affected areas and not open up National Parks to logging.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Andrew Bone".

**Lawyers for Forests Inc**