



# Bill Summary

## The Indian Forest (Amendment) Bill, 2012

- The Indian Forest (Amendment) Bill, 2012 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on March 26, 2012 by Ms. Jayanthi Natarajan, Minister of State for Environment and Forests. The Bill has been referred to the Department Related Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests.
- The Bill amends the Indian Forest Act, 1927 (the principal Act). The Act consolidates the law related to forests and forest produce. It prohibits certain activities, some of which are punishable with imprisonment of up to six months or a fine of Rs 500. These include making fresh clearances in forests and setting fire to a reserved forest. These offences can be compounded by officers empowered by the state government. [To compound an offence means to accept compensation in lieu of punishment. This relief is also allowed under Section 320 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 for certain offences.]
- Under the Act, only officers of the rank of a ranger or above, who draw a salary of at least Rs 100 per month may be empowered to compound offences. The Bill removes the minimum salary requirement of an officer to be empowered to compound offences.
- The Act allows officers to compound offences for a compensation of up to Rs 50. The Bill seeks to increase this amount to Rs 10,000.
- The Bill also requires forest officers to obtain and record the views of the Gram Sabha before they compound an offence in a Scheduled Area.

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