

AS INTRODUCED IN THE RAJYA SABHA
ON THE 21ST JULY, 2017

Bill No. XV of 2017

THE WATER SCARCE REGIONS OF MARATHWADA, VIDHARBHA,
BUNDELKHAND AND IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN PARTS
(PROHIBITION OF GROWING WATER INTENSIVE CROPS
AND SETTING UP OF THERMAL POWER PLANTS
AND OTHER LARGE SCALE WATER INTENSIVE
INDUSTRIES) BILL, 2017

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BILL

to provide for the prohibition of growing water intensive crops and setting up of thermal power plants and other large scale water intensive industries in water scarce regions of Marathwada, Vidharbha, Bundelkhand and such other regions in eastern and southern parts of the country and for the promotion of growing less water consuming crops particularly those developed by Indian Council of Agricultural Research and such other bodies and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Sixty-eighth Year of the Republic of India, as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the Water Scarce Regions of Marathwada, Vidharbha, Bundelkhand and in Eastern and Southern Parts (Prohibition of Growing Water intensive Crops and Setting up of Thermal Power Plants and other large scale water intensive Industries) Act, 2017.

Short title,
extent and
commencement.

(2) It extends to the whole of India.

(3) It shall come into force with immediate effect.

Definitions.

2. In the Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) "appropriate Government" means in the case of a State the Government of that State and in other cases the Central Government;

(b) "Council" means Indian Council Agricultural Research set up by the Government of India; 5

(c) "Water intensive crops" means those crops which require large quantities of water for growing them and declared as water intensive by the Central Government by notification in the Official Gazette, of its own or as recommended by the Council.

Prohibition of growing water intensive crops and setting up of thermal power plants and other large scale water consuming industries in water scarce regions.

3. (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force or any decree of any Court of Memorandum of Understanding between the appropriate Government and any company or firm or any permission accorded by any authority or agency of the Government, growing of water intensive crops and setting up of thermal power plants and other large scale water intensive industries in water scarce regions in Marathwada, Vidharbha, Bundelkhand and such other regions, is hereby prohibited. 10 15

(2) It shall be the duty of the appropriate Government to ensure the compliance of the provisions of this Act.

(3) It shall be the duty of the appropriate government and council to develop less water consuming cereals for water scarce regions and promote adoption of diversifying cropping patterns and modern agronomic practices in such regions. 20

Penalty.

4. Whoever contravenes any of the provisions of this Act shall be punishable with simple imprisonment of six months and with fine not less than two lakh rupees but which may extend to five lakh rupees.

Overriding effect of the Act.

5. The provisions of this Act and rules made thereunder shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in any other law for the time being in force. 25

Power to remove difficulties.

6. If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may make such order or give such direction, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, as appears to it to be necessary or expedient for the removal of the difficulty and any such order shall be final. 30

Power to make rules.

7. The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Marathwada, Vidharbha and Madhya Maharashtra regions in the State of Maharashtra, Bundelkhand in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and certain other regions in Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh etc. are water scarce and drought prone regions. Of late these regions are getting scanty rainfall and levels of groundwater are depleting very fast. In these regions even drinking water is a luxury. Consistent drought conditions have brought hunger, starvation, suicide by farmers, economic backwardness and other miseries in these areas.

As per study conducted by Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune and the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, the large impact of Marathwada drought in the year 2015 is a reflection of poor management of water resources and agriculture. It is also a fact that in these regions, for earning more money, farmers are lured to sow water intensive crops such as sugarcane, paddy etc. Mostly the groundwater is used in raising these crops leading to severe drought and water scarcity.

Similarly, large quantities of water is required in thermal power plants for cooling and various other purposes. Various Industries particularly producing mineral water, colas etc. also use large quantities of water. Such power plants and industries need to be discouraged in water scarce regions. The study which has been referred to above has advocated adoption of sustainable strategies consistent with the nature variability for rainfed agriculture such as diversification with pulses and water resource management. Farmers may be given advisories for diversifying cropping pattern from water intensive crops to pulses, oilseeds, maize and agro forestry and adoption of modern agronomic practices like raised bed sowing, alternate furrow irrigation, sprinkler irrigation, drip irrigation, mulching etc.

Several drought tolerant varieties of paddy have been developed in the country. Farmers may be advised to go for sowing these varieties. It is learnt that in Indonesia drought tolerant sugarcane is grown in a big way. This may be tested in our country so that we do not have to face the shortage of sugar. However, in water scarce regions growing of water intensive crops and setting up of thermal power plants and other large scale water intensive industries have to be banned.

Hence this Bill.

RAJKUMAR DHOOT

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 7 of the Bill empowers the Central Government to make rules for carrying out the purposes of the Bill. The rules will relate to matters of details only. The delegation of legislative power is of normal character.

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(Shri Rajkumar Dhoot, M.P.)