

MINUTES OF THE 19th STATE LEVEL COMMITTEE (SLC) MEETING ON WOOD BASED INDUSTRIES HELD ON 25.06.2024, IN THE OFFICE OF THE PRL. CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS & HEAD OF FOREST FORCE, A.P., MANGALAGIRI.

The 19th meeting of the SLC was held on 25.06.2024 at 11.00 a.m. in the Office of the Prl. Chief Conservator of Forests & Head of Forest Force, Andhra Pradesh, Mangalagiri to consider various proposals of Wood Based Industries for change of ownership, relocations and other related matters as per Andhra Pradesh Wood Based Industries (Establishment and Regulation) Rules, 2018.

The following members attended the meeting:

1.	Sri Chiranjiv Choudhary, IFS, Prl.CCF&HoFF, A.P., Mangalagiri
2.	Dr.R.P.Khajuria, IFS, PCCF (Production), O/o Prl.CCF&HoFF, A.P., Mangalagiri
3.	Sri K. Balaji, IFS, Asst. Inspector General of Forests, Sub-office, Vijayawada, MoEF&CC. (Online)
4.	Smt. N. Swarnalatha, Divisional Manager, APFDC Ltd
5.	Sri M.V. Suryanarayana, Addl. Assistant Commissioner O/oChief Commissioner of Land Administration(Online)
6.	Smt. Vijaya Lakshmi , Dy. Director, Agriculture Department(Online)
7.	Sri P. Subramanyeswara Rao , Deputy Director, Industries.
8.	Sri Dwara Ramakrishna, General Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Federation of Timber Merchants', Sawmillers & Allied Industries.
9.	Sri Kondala Rao, President, Andhra Pradesh Federation of Timber Merchants', Sawmillers& Allied Industries.

At the outset, Sri R.P.Khajuria IFS, Prl. Chief Conservator of Forests (Production) and Member Secretary, SLC welcomed the Chairman and all the members of the SLC present in the meeting and briefed about the Agenda for the 19th SLC meeting as follows:

S.No.	Agenda
1	ATR on the MoM of 18 th SLC held on 19.02.2024.
2	Proposals for Transfer of ownership a. by Succession (18) b. by Sale (4) c. along with relocation of Sawmill (4)
3	Relocation of Sawmills (Nil)
4	Fresh license for lapsed licenses (1)
5	Left over Proposals for new/additional machinery in the 18th SLC wherein certain verification was requested by the DFOs
6	Any other items with the permission of the Chair

With the permission of the Chair, agenda was taken up for discussion one by one and decisions by the SLC.

1. Action Taken Report on the decisions in the 18th SLC meeting.

The minutes of the 18th SLC were placed before the SLC for confirmation and the same were confirmed. ATR on the decisions of the 18th SLC meeting was placed before the SLC and the same was approved by the SLC.

2. Proposals for Transfer of ownership:

The SLC examined the proposals under different categories and decided on each category as detailed below:

a. Transfer of ownership by Succession

Proposals in respect of the following (18) Sawmills were approved, under Rule 11, of The Andhra Pradesh Wood Based Industries(Establishment and Regulation) Rules, 2018 based the recommendations of the Circle Heads and District Forest Officers for transfer of ownership by succession.

S. No	Division	Sawmill Name	Distance from Forest (Km)
1	Vizianagaram	Sri Venkata Kanaka DurgaSawmill	6.67
2	Prakasam	M/s Hema Timber Traders and Sawmill	23.16
3	Atmakur	Murthujavali Sawmill and Timber Depot	7.29
4	Tirupati	M/s Sri Sai Sawmill	0.23
5	Tirupati	M/s Chenchu Prasad Sawmill and Timber Depot	1.8
6	Tirupati	M/s Bharat Sawmill	1.78
7	Tirupati	M/s Annapurna Sawmill	1.6
8	East Godavari	M/s Sri Sai Ram Sawmill and Wood Works	6.16
9	Kurnool	M/s Andhra Sawmill	1.83
10	Kurnool	M/s Jeelani Vali Saheb Sawmill	1.74
11	Kurnool	M/s Ravi Teja Sawmill	2.52
12	Kurnool	M/s Sri Lakshmi Sawmill& Timber Depot	5.32
13	Chittoor	M/s Usha Jyothi Sawmill	4.80
14	Eluru	Sri Srinivasa Sai Lakshmi Sawmill	5.96
15	Eluru	Sri Veera BrahmendraSawmill	7.54
16	East Godavari	Sri Rama Sawmill	14.59
17	East Godavari	Sri RamaWood Industries	15.6
18	Kakinada	M/s Mangatayaru Sawmill	17.01

b. Transfer of ownership by Sale

Proposals in respect of the following (4) Sawmills were approved, under Rule 11, of The Andhra Pradesh Wood Based Industries(Establishment and Regulation) Rules, 2018 based on the recommendations of the Circle Heads and Divisional Forest Officers for transfer of ownership by sale.

S. No	Division	Sawmill Name	Distance from Forest (Km)
1	Srikakulam	Sri Nagamani Sawmill & Depot	10.038

2	East Godavari	M/s Sri SrinivasaSawmill	16.83
3	East Godavari	M/s Sri SrinivasaSawmill	8.08
4	Guntur	Sri Naganjaneya Sawmill	1.5

c. Transfer of ownership along with relocation of Sawmill

Proposals in respect of the following (4) Sawmills were approved, under Rule 11, of The Andhra Pradesh Wood Based Industries(Establishment and Regulation) Rules, 2018 based on the recommendation of the Circle Heads and Divisional Forest Officers for transfer of ownership with relocation.

S. No	Division	Check List Type	Sawmill Name	Relocation Distance (Km)
1	N.T.R	(Within the Division)	Sri Uma pack Tech	6.78
2	East Godavari	(Within the Division)	Venkanna Sawmill	14.62
3	Krishna	to Gajuwaka, Visakhapatnam	Sri Lakshmi Venkata Manikanta Timber Depot & Sawmill	3.99 (Municipal area)
4	Vizianagaram	(Within the division)	Sri Satya Sawmill	6.99

3. Relocation of Sawmills

S. No.	Division	Sawmill Name	Relocation Distance (Km.)
NIL			

4. Fresh license to the lapsed licenses

The following proposal is placed before the SLC have been examined by members.

S.nN	Division	Sawmill Name	Distance from Forest (km)
1	Prakasam	Sri Lakshmi Sawmill	18.5

Based on the information provided by the CCF, Guntur, it is observed that the Sawmill license has lapsed on 31.12.2021 due to non-renewal by the legal heirs of the owner who passed away in November, 2021. As per Rule 10(2) of The Andhra Pradesh Wood Based Industries(Establishment and Regulation) Rules 2018, the restoration of lapsed sawmill license could have been done by February 2022. Beyond this date they have to apply for a fresh license for closed sawmill with lapsed license. Although the DFO Prakasam informed during the meeting that they have already applied online for New saw mill as called for by the department. However, on verification it is found that no such application is made by the legal heirs when the applications were invited for New saw mills. As such, the applicants may apply for New Sawmill following the procedure as per extant rules, as and when the Department invites applications for the same. The DFO shall inform the applicants accordingly.

5. Proposals for new/additional machinery deferred in the 18th SLC for want of certain information and requested for certain verification by the DFOs.

1. The Committee in the 18th SLC meeting held on 19.02.2024 deliberated on the applications received in online portal for establishment of New sawmills and additional machinery in the existing sawmills, with reference to the further information received from the Circle Heads, as called for in the 17th SLC and the requirement of timber, projected based on WBIs guidelines, as well as restricting the maximum HP for each sawmill to 40 HP, as decided in 17th SLC.
2. The Committee has considered **358** saw mills applications and permitted to establish Additional machinery and **85** applications for establishment of New saw mills, subject to maximum capacity of 40 HP, giving liberty to the applicants to choose the additional machinery such as Vertical, Horizontal or Circular saw so as to confine to 40 HP.
3. However, out of 443 (358+85) sawmill applications payment was made only by 328 sawmill applicants and the payment is still pending from the remaining 115 sawmill applicants.
4. Further, in the last 18th SLC meeting, it was also decided by the SLC, that the applications for (125) New saw mills, rejected or not considered on the grounds that they are not falling in Industrial Areas, the DFOs and Circle heads shall re-examine such applications in accordance with G.O.Ms.No.63, Industries & Commerce (SSI) Department, dt.02.05.1995 and confirm whether the said saw mill is proposed in non-residential areas and submit the same to be placed before the ensuing SLC.
5. The Circle Heads and DFOs have submitted re-verified proposals only for 13 such applications for establishment of New Sawmills, with certificates obtained from authorities concerned. Balance (112) such saw mills are various levels of verification as reported by the CFs/DFOs.
6. After detailed discussions on the above issues, the SLC decided that;
 1. All the DFOs shall issue notices to the applicants concerned to comply with the decisions of the 18th SLC by **10th July, 2024** .
 2. In the Notice, 02 weeks time may be given to make payments through the online payment gateway of the department, and
 3. (6) weeks time to submit the required documents from the competent authority regarding location of the New proposed saw mill in Non- residential/Industrial area.
 4. Thereafter, within next (2) weeks, each DFO shall thoroughly verify the documents provided by the applicants as above, regarding the location of the proposed new Saw mill at his level.
 5. Each DFO shall issue proceedings to the applicants whose applications are rejected due to non-payment of the requisite fees or incomplete/non-submission of documents regarding the location of the proposed new Saw mill.
 6. Each DFO shall thereafter submit a comprehensive report through the Conservator to the PCCF&HoFF by **20th September, 2024**,
 7. In respect of (13) re-verified proposals, the SLC authorised the PCCF&HoFF to take further action as per rules.
7. Further, it was resolved by the SLC, as recommended by Sri Dwara Ramakrishna, General Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Federation of Timber Merchants', Sawmillers & Allied Industries, that only one Vertical and one Horizontal saw shall be permitted within the maximum (40) HP. Multiple

Horizontal/Vertical/Circular saws shall not be permitted in one Sawmill. The DFOs shall accordingly take further action the matter.

6. **Other items:**

- I. **WP No.19783 of 2023, filed by Sri Y. Penchalaiah, S/o Venkata Narayana, Prop: Sri Lakshmi Sawmill, Kaligiri(V&M), SPSR Nellore District.**
 - **Sri Y. Penchalaiah**, has submitted representation, that the Hon'ble High Court has disposed his Writ Petition No. 19783 of 2023 and requested to take necessary action.
 - The Hon'ble Court issued the following order on 03.01.2024, even though the sawmill is situated within the 5 km from the forest boundary.
 - **"In view of the above discussion, this Court feels it appropriate to allow the present writ petition by directing the respondent No.2 to consider the case of the petitioner for renewal of the sawmill license on par with other similarly situated sawmills that are located within 5Km distance from nearest forest boundary whose license was renewed and to whom permission was granted to run sawmill.**
 - **Accordingly, this writ petition is allowed. There shall be no order as to costs."**
 - The DFO, Nellore has submitted proposals, through CCF, Guntur for relocation of sawmill in respect of M/s Sri Lakshmi Sawmill, Kaligiri(V&M), SPSR Nellore District, as per the directions of the Hon'ble High Court Orders in WP No.19783 of 2023, dt.03.01.2024 to place before the SLC.
 - The Government pleader for CS & Forest (A.P), in Lr.No.W.P.No.19783/2023 CS&FOREST/HC, dt.29.05.2024, has informed that it is a fit case to file the Writ Appeal on this order. If not challenged it would become a precedent in future, Writ Appeal should be filed by the respondents in the above writ petition immediately.
 - In view of the Hon'ble Court orders and the opinion of the Government pleader, the DFO, Nellore, being respondent No. 2, was already requested to file W.A., in this office Rc. No.4729/2019/Prod.3, dt..06.2024, as suggested by the G.P.for CS & Forest (A.P).
 - The Committee noted the action taken and requested the CF and DFO concerned to take prompt action within the stipulated time and ensure that WA is filed and stay obtained on the HHC order as above and ensure that no contempt is made out against the respondents.
- II. **WP No.1077 of 2024, filed by Sri Malla Venkateswara Rao, S/o M. Ganeswararao, Prop: M/s Ganesh Plywood Industries, Pisinikada(V), Anakapalli(M), Anakapali District.**
 - The Hon'ble High Court has disposed the Writ Petition No. 1077 of 2024 with the following order on 11.03.2024 for shifting sawmill into a site, though it is situated within 5 km distance from the boundasry forest area.
 - Accordingly, the Writ Petition is allowed and the order in proceedings vides File No.EFS02-18031/4/2023-PRODUCTION SEC -PCCF, Dated 22.11.2023(17th SLC Minutes) issued by the respondent No.2(SLC) is hereby set-aside. The respondents are directed to accord permission to the petitioner for relocation of sawmill to the land situated in Sy.No.51/10, 51/11 of Butchayyapeta village and Mandal, Anakapalli District within a period of four (04) weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of the order. It is also made clear that the respondents are directed not to interfere with

- the activities of the petitioner sawmill. There shall be no order as to costs.”
- The DFO, Anakapalli has submitted proposals, for relocation of sawmill in respect of M/s Ganesh Plywood Industries, Pisinikada(V), Anakapalli(M), Anakapali District, as per the directions of the Hon'ble High Court Orders in WP No.1077 of 2024, dt.11.03.2024 to place before the SLC.
 - As it being a fit case to challenge the orders of the Hon'ble Court, the G.P. for Forests was requested in PCCF&HoFF Rc.no.992/2024/Prod.3, dt.12.05.2024, to challenge the orders of the Hon'ble High Court, in a bench through W.A. and seek urgent Interim Stay
 - The DFO, Anakapalli was requested to take follow up action to file W.A. in this case in consultation with the G.P.
 - The Government, taking stock of the situation, addressed the Advocate General, A.P. High Court requesting to arrange to file Writ Appeal seeking urgent Interim Stay and ensure that no contempt is invoked against the A.P. Forest Department due to summer vacations.
 - The DFO has sent draft Writ Appeal to the G.P after taking approval from the CCF, Visakhapatnam. The Range officer Chodavaram has been drafted to apprise the G.P. along with connected records after consulting the G.P. over phone by the DFO, Anakapalli.
 - The Committee noted the action taken and requested the CF and DFO concerned to take prompt action within the stipulated time and ensure that WA is filed and stay obtained on the HHC order as above and ensure that no contempt is made out against the respondents.

The meeting concluded with the Prl. Chief Conservator of Forests & Head of Forest Force thanking all the members for participating and providing valuable inputs.

Chiranjiv Choudhary Ifs
Prl. Chief Conservator of Forests &HoFF
Chairman, State Level Committee
Andhra Pradesh