

14th August 2014

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To: Hon. Chief Minister **Smt. Vasundhara Raje**,

Chief Minister's Office,
Secretariat, JAIPUR 302005
Phone : +91(141)2227656, 2227716
Fax : +91(141)2227687
Email : cmraj@rajasthan.gov.in

Re: State of Village Relocation efforts at Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve (RTR).

Dear Madam,

To offer a quick introduction, I am a corporate executive based in the United States and a strong biodiversity conservation catalyst & supporter. As a result have travelled extensively across most of the North American, African and Indian landscapes and built a personal initiative to help understand and support the green initiatives and wildlife, specifically – Project Tiger. I have always been supportive and appreciative of initiatives underway to safeguard Rajasthan's environment and forests.

In India specifically, during my visits over the past four years, I have been involved with the ground level initiatives and village relocation undertaken by the Rajasthan Forest department at RTR towards habitat development under Project Tiger. While this has provided many insights into the challenges our habitats face due to anthropogenic pressures, it has also offered perspectives into challenges faced by the wildlife itself towards their sustenance. My regular visits, association and involvement with this work have given me unique perspectives of life in the semi-arid terrain of Rajasthan for man and animal alike. Even though the core N.P. habitat extends over an area of about 400 sq. km. namely Ranthambhore National Park (RNP), the greater CTH extends beyond RNP including the Sawai Mansingh Sanctuary, Sawai Madhopur Sanctuary, KelaDevi Sanctuary and Qualji Reserve forest totaling about 1100 sq. km. I commend all such initiatives and look forward to supporting your government over the coming years.

To offer a quick update on the relocation work so far, over the past four years the Rajasthan Forest Department's RTR staff and the Sawai Madhopur District Administration have been overseeing relocation of approximately 1364 families across 8 villages under Phase I (Kalibhat, Hindwar, Mordungri, Bheed, Kathuli, Paddada, Indala & Mundhredi). I understand that about 75% of this initiative is nearing completion. The key success factor to this initiative is completion of the remaining 25% in a timely manner such that all loose ends are tied. I understand the last disbursement monies for the work has arrived from the NTCA. Further it is imperative that nothing gets left to chance that will jeopardize the good efforts of your government and forest department's efforts for the future of the green initiatives at RTR. The areas of land surrendered to the government have to be brought under the greening program and checks put in against re-encroachment. Especially Sawai Mansingh Sanctuary's revival is critical to Project Tiger at RTR since this is the first overflow space for tigers growing up in the core area and there have been ten litters this past 2 years and at least 26 cubs – all these need an inviolate space to move into if we have to sustain healthy tiger populations. The relocation of villages under phase-I is providing precisely this. ***I feel this initiative needs your support and hence my letter.***

Per my observation I want to emphasize that the role taken up the RFD staff working on relocation is very involved, not only limited to the forest work but hand holding of villagers through various stages of moving out, information sharing time and again, working with the revenue department and collector's offices to ease out a lot of nitty-gritty and details – it's amazing team work that is required. There have been a couple of challenges that need your urgent attention,

- a. Since the beginning of this year the DFO Relocation and field staff have been anticipating re-validated funds from NTCA that are facilitated via the state bureaucracy. I understand that there have been some challenges in the process which have now been rectified and re-submitted to NTCA. However as a result of these interchanges, funds got delayed & have still not arrived. The field staff has been pending disbursements to villagers for over 6 months now and that has got the initiative to a stand-still. This is causing much hardship & anxiety to the villagers who would have otherwise moved out of RTR before the rains. Secondly it is demoralizing the forest department field staff, which faces a day-to-day liaison with the villagers. **I would humbly request if the state can step in and make temporary provision of monies via the RTR foundation funds or any other as suitable that would be worthwhile. Any such provision will ensure COMPLETE relocation of 3 villages of Kalibhat, Bhid and Kathuli in coming months.**
- b. Also since the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for village relocation was launched in 2006 by the Prime Minister of India, a million Rupees per family are being offered for each eligible family willing to relocate. However given the sharp appreciation of land prices in Rajasthan and rising inflation of the last decade this money is not sufficient for villager-families to buy land in the non-forest areas towards their relocation. Some other states are supplementing the CSS amount by a 'State's' contribution to ensure the relocation continues. **I would hereby request the same be considered by the State of Rajasthan to help**

the current relocation effort. Sincere request this be considered after consultations with the CWLW and inputs of respective DFO-Relocation of the NP's and tabled to the next State Committee on Relocation meeting.

As is evident, relocation effort plays a **very critical role** for conservation and stability of bio-diversity of the region & helps to add to the inviolate space. I therefore write this letter in good faith and as a friend and well-wisher of Rajasthan Forest Department. I truly believe Rajasthan has a unique position being a leader in conservation and relocation at a large scale. I shall continue to support initiatives and look forward to working together. *I would therefore appreciate if your office can make a note and make temporary arrangements by explicit approval for relocation amount until the CSS monies are received from the union government and also consider increasing the current relocation amount on offering an additional suitable component from the State appropriation and budget.*

Thanking you in advance for all your help in the matter. Please do the needful and oblige. Do not hesitate to contact me at bsethi@gmail.com / +91 98330 56346 / +1.732.636.2953.

Yours Sincerely,



Encl : Current Relocation status report

Cc: Mr. O.P Meena, Addl. Chief Secretary, Env & Forests, State of Rajasthan
Mr. S.N. Singh, CWLW, Rajasthan Forest Department
Mr. H.S. Negi, Addl. Director, NTCA
Mr. P.S. Somasekar, Addl. PCCF, Rajasthan Forest Department
Mr. R.L. Choudhary, DFO-Relocation, RTR, Rajasthan Forest Department
Mr. M.K. RanjitSinh, Member – Wild Life Board of India

OFFICE OF THE DCF & DEPUTY FIELD DIRECTOR, FIRST, KANTHAMBORE TIGER RESERVE, SAWAI MADHOPUR

PROGRESS OF VILLAGE RELOCATION

S.N.	Name of village	Total families	Physical and financial progress from 2009 to 2013				Physical and financial progress from 2013 to 2014				Total Physical and financial progress from 2009 to 2014				Remarks
1	Kalibhat	47	36	34	33	343.43	5	1	1	19.96	41(6)	45	34	365.39	
2	Mordungti	157	154	154	154	1402.35	0	0	0	5.43	154	154	154	1407.78	2
3	Rhid	164	120	103	101	1028.42	16	18	20	126.01	136	28	121	1154.43	
4	Kathooi	151	136	130	127	1298.08	1	1	1	10.16	137	14	128	1308.24	
5	Lindwai	575	373	355	330	3517.71	0	0	0	0.92	373	20	330	3518.63	2
6	Mundeyheri	161	67	44	37	447.18	0	1	3	31.32	67	94	45	478.5	2
7	Padha	23	23	23	23	95.33	0	0	0	0.81	23	0	23	96.14	
	Total	1278	909	843	805	8132.5	22	21	30	194.61	931	864	835	8327.11	

31 Mar 14

(Rs in L)

1/7/2014