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Complaint- Personal Negotiations undertaken by Faculty Members of BHU to favour Welspun Energy (U.P.) Pvt. Ltd in getting Environment Clearance from MoEF

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Bcc: vindhya-bachao@googlegroups.com

To,

The Vice Chancellor,

Banaras Hindu University

Varanasi

Subject: Complaint- Personal Negotiations undertaken by Faculty Members of BHU to favour Welspun Energy (U.P.) Pvt. Ltd in getting Environment Clearance from MoEF

Respected Sir,

I hope you are aware that the Expert Appraisal Committee-Coal and Thermal Power Plant has recommended Environmental Clearance for the proposed 1320 MW Thermal Power Plant of M/s Welspun Energy (U.P.) Pvt. Ltd in its meeting dated 25 March, 2015. The minutes of the meeting are available at the Ministry of Environment and Forests portal, and are attached herewith as *Annexure A*.

As all of us know, the project has been opposed by the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) since the initiation of the project and there have been several protests from the students in this regard. In fact, the Registrar of BHU has already written to the Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) regarding shifting of the project site vide letter dated 18th September, 2013. In addition to this, a petition of RGSC (Rajiv Gandhi South Campus) students supporting the Registrar's letter and showing their protest has also been sent to MoEF.

We (Vindhya Bachao) have already sent representations to your office via emails dated 9th March, 2014, 20th February, 2014, 18th December, 2013 and 17th September, 2013.

The reason why I am writing to you is, that the official EAC Minutes have recorded that - there were two meetings held on 08.03.2014 and 10.03.2014 in BHU Varanasi Campus and RGSC and that the company has satisfied the University regarding the issues raised. (Minutes of the said meetings are attached as *Annexure B*)

We would like to bring to your attention that:

1. The said meeting was not an official meeting. Certain faculty members from BHU had participated in the meeting in their personal capacity and gave recommendations in favour of the project. The Meeting was conducted without giving a prior notice to the university and the minutes of the meeting were

presented falsely before the EAC of the MoEF in order to show that the same was an official meeting with 'Expert Members of BHU'. The members present at these meetings were handpicked by the company with the help of Prof. Guruprasad Singh who co-ordinated the meetings. It may be noted that Prof. Guruprasad Singh has had several unofficial meetings with the project proponent prior to the meetings held on 08.03.2014 and 10.03.2014. Given his close association with the company, we have decided to no longer have him associated with the work of our organization. An official email to this effect was circulated on 23rd March, 2014. The email is attached as *Annexure C*.

3. On the basis of the false statements made by the project proponent, the EAC, under the impression that the issues with respect to the project are resolved and BHU has desired to be part of the environmental cell, recommended Environment Clearance for the project and asked the project proponent to work closely with BHU during operational phase of the thermal power plant.

It is submitted that:

1. The negotiations by the members were in their personal capacity, and do not reflect the official position of the BHU. This was clarified by two of the faculty members (Dr. Anil Pandey and Mr. Vijai Krishna) present during the meeting, who sent an official email to Registrar, BHU and Secretary, MoEF on 23rd March, 2014 wherein they have categorically said that they neither represented University, nor agreed to resolve the issues and that the discussion dated 10.03.2014 should not be used for any legal consideration.
2. The long term impacts of such a decision would be extremely harmful for the local environment and the University, as has been highlighted in several representations.

Since the Expert Appraisal Committee in its meeting has asked the project proponent to work closely with BHU and form a committee, it is necessary, that the University must take necessary action in this regard and write to the MoEF clarifying that the project proponent has played fraud and is trying its best efforts to obtain the environment clearance by misleading the EAC under the garb of university.

Being an alumnus of BHU and environmentally concerned citizen I request you to

- i) Order a formal committee for investigation regarding the meetings held on 8th and 10th March which was quoted in the minutes of the meeting of the EAC.
- ii) Clarify to the MoEF the whole development and whether or not BHU accepts the project proponent's reply to the Registrar's letter dated 18th September, 2013.
- iii) Involve students, civil society and Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development (BHU) in its decision making process.

Thanks in anticipation.

Regards,
Debadityo Sinha

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Copy marked to

1. Secretary, (E & F), Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi
2. Registrar, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi
3. Director, Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi
4. The Chairman, Core Group, Rajiv Gandhi South Campus, Banaras Hindu University, Mirzapur
5. The Officer on Special Duty, Rajiv Gandhi South Campus, Banaras Hindu University, Mirzapur
6. The Dy. Registrar, Rajiv Gandhi South Campus, Banaras Hindu University, Mirzapur

3 attachments

 **Annexure A (MoEF meeting minutes).pdf**
319K

 **Annexure B (Welspun meeting minutes).pdf**
1319K

 **Annexure C (GP Singh).pdf**
95K