

**Before the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal
Principal Bench, New Delhi**

Original Application no. 624 of 2023

**In Re: News item published in The Tribune dated 28.09.2023 titled
"Hills 'vanish' as illegal Mining rampant in BEET area"**

Short reply of Additional Secretary to Government of Punjab,
Department of Science, Technology and Environment on behalf of
respondent no. 2 i.e. The Secretary, Department of Environment,
Punjab.

Respectfully Showeth,

- 1) That briefly submitted the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal in suo moto exercise of its powers on the basis of the news item dated 28.09.2023 published in the Tribune titled "Hills 'vanish' as illegal mining rampant in Beet area" has registered Original Application No. 624 of 2023. News item discloses that on account of the illegal mining, Shivalik Hills, as high as 200 feet in the Beet area of Garhshankar sub-Division, are slowly vanishing. As per the news report, the mining mafia is carrying out illegal mining in the forests and mountains and that the stone crusher operators in the villages of Kalewal-Beet, Khuralgarh Sahib and Garhimansowal along with Mahindpur, Kheda, Kalmot, Bhangla, Haripur, Plata and Splanwa Salsunga of Rupnagar District have ravaged the green cover due to illegal mining. News Report further states that illegal mining has reached to a record level of 200 ft. deep and at some places, entire hills have been erased by the mining mafia and inspite of the complaint, no action is being taken by the competent authorities.
- 2) That the Punjab Pollution Control Board has filed short reply before the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal in O.A No. 624 of 2023 disclosing that during the visit of the area the traces of fresh as well as old mining were found and XEN Mining

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Rupnagar has informed that the FIRs were registered against the violators including transporters, machine operators and they have confiscated the machinery. The Hon'ble National Green Tribunal In its order dated 16.10.2023 has observed that the report so submitted by the Member Secretary, PPCB is vague as it does not disclose the extent of illegal mining and also does not disclose the details of the FIRs which have been registered and the equipment which has been seized. The report is absolutely silent in respect of the stone crushers which are operating in the area either illegally or legally.

In the facts and circumstances of the case, the Hon'ble Tribunal vide the said orders dated 16.10.2023 has impleaded the following respondents to enable them to file their response in the case:

- i. Additional Chief Secretary (ACS)/Principal Secretary (PS), Mining Department, State of Punjab
- ii. Additional Chief Secretary/PS, Department of Environment, State of Punjab
- iii. Member Secretary, Punjab Pollution Control Board
- iv. District Magistrate, Hoshiarpur
- v. District Magistrate, Rupnagar
- vi. Chief Conservator of Forest, Regional Office, MoEF&CC, Chandigarh

3) That the undersigned is working as Additional Secretary to Government of Punjab, Department of Science, Technology and Environment and as such is conversant with the facts and circumstances of the case and is authorized and competent to file the present reply on behalf of the Secretary to Government of Punjab, Department of Science, Technology and Environment.

4) That it is relevant to mention here that the Punjab Pollution Control Board is working under the administrative control of the Government of Punjab, Department of Science Technology and Environment. The Punjab Pollution Control Board has already taken action in accordance with the provisions of the



law and has filed separate reply in the case before the Hon'ble Tribunal. The Department of Science, Technology and Environment adopts the reply filed by the Punjab Pollution Control Board. If any separate direction is given by this Hon'ble Tribunal in the facts and circumstances of the case, the Department of Science Technology and Environment will implement the same.

- 5) That the short reply is hereby submitted on behalf of respondent no. 2 i.e the Department of Environment, Punjab.

Submitted by



Additional Secretary to Government of Punjab
Department of Science Technology and Environment
(On behalf of respondent no. 2)