

28th July 2026

Dear Minister Fu,

I am writing as a highly concerned Singaporean regarding the meeting on 30th July 2026 at Telok Blangah CC on the proposed development of Gillman Forest and Gillman Barracks.

I was surprised to learn that the meeting brings together URA, HDB and NParks, agencies responsible for planning, housing and parks, yet there appears to be no representative from the Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment.

I find this omission difficult to understand.

Gillman Forest is not simply a land-use question. It is a question of climate resilience, biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability. If the future of a forest is being discussed, it seems self-evident that the ministry responsible for sustainability should be represented as an equal stakeholder. Without MSE at the table, it is difficult to see how environmental considerations can be weighed alongside development priorities in a balanced and transparent manner.

My concern also extends beyond Gillman Forest itself.

In 2021, Singapore joined more than 130 countries in signing the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, committing to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030. At the time, the Government stated that "forests and terrestrial ecosystems play an important role in reducing the effects of climate change."

That commitment was an important statement of intent. However, Singaporeans are finding it increasingly difficult to reconcile that international commitment with the continued clearance of ecologically significant forests at home. Whether it is Dover or now Maju and Gillman Forest, or the plan to cut down 50 mature rain trees to build workers' dorms for the Berlayer construction works, and so on, the pattern raises pertinent questions about how Singapore interprets its commitment to halt and reverse forest loss.

The climate crisis has fundamentally changed the context in which decisions about what to do with Singapore's land are made. Forests are no longer simply undeveloped land awaiting future use. They are functioning ecosystems that store carbon, moderate temperatures, support biodiversity and strengthen resilience against a warming climate. Their value should be reflected not only in our public statements, but in our planning decisions.

Historically, decisions involving forests have largely been led by agencies such as URA, HDB and NParks, each fulfilling its own statutory responsibilities. That may have been appropriate in Singapore's initial stages of development. Today, however, sustainability is not a peripheral issue. It is central to Singapore's long-term security and resilience.

Yet the current planning for land use appears to leave the Ministry of Sustainability and Environment without a formal role in key decisions involving the permanent loss of forests. If that is indeed the case, then environmental considerations risk being assessed within the priorities and mandates of URA and HDB, rather than being represented independently through the ministry established to safeguard them.

Our governance requires more than each agency fulfilling its own mandate, instead evolving as circumstances change. The realities of the climate and biodiversity crises call for decision-making that is genuinely cross-ministerial, where sustainability is embedded from the outset rather than considered after development objectives have already been defined.

I would therefore be grateful if you could clarify:

1. Why is the Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment not represented at the 30th July 2026 meeting on Gillman Forest?
2. Does MSE have a formal role in decisions involving the clearance of ecologically significant forests, or are such decisions principally determined by planning and development agencies?
3. Does the Ministry believe that the current governance framework adequately reflects Singapore's commitments on climate change, biodiversity and forest conservation?
Thus, will you hold yourselves accountable to your climate pledges and to the people of Singapore?

These questions are about the urgency to save Gillman and Maju forests, as well as other forests slated for future development. They are also about whether Singapore's institutions have evolved to meet the defining environmental challenge of our time. If we are serious about our commitment to halt and reverse forest loss by 2030, then our domestic governance should visibly reflect that commitment.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Amanda