



FREUNDE DER ERDE

Dr. Angelika Zahrnt
President

Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk
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Excellency, dear Minister van Schalkwyk,

on behalf of Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz (Friends of the Earth Germany) I would like to express my concerns regarding the Wild Coast. This last natural coast line in South Africa is in danger to be irrecoverably destroyed by road construction and mining. Please consider this letter as a petition and plea to the government of South Africa, most notably the Honorable President and the Ministers of the Department of Minerals and Energy, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and the Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs, regarding any plans of mining for the Pondoland Wild Coast area.

It was brought to our notice that an application for a licence to mine dunes along a 22 km strip of coast of the northern Eastern Cape has been accepted for evaluation by the Department of Minerals and Energy. Our knowledge of the Wild Coast leads us to believe that this is not optimal usage of the resources.

We believe that where there is a choice of development options for any particular area it is incumbent on Government to select those that have the greatest potential to benefit the most number of local people in the longer term with the least negative impact on their customary way of life and on the eco-systems that support this. Such is the case of the Wild Coast where, because of its natural splendour and richness of biodiversity, strong potential exists to develop eco-tourism nodes that will improve the material wealth of the local people whilst maintaining their lifestyles and the integrity of the region.

The Wild Coast Conservation and Sustainable Development Project planning documents that we have had sight of through a South African website are laudable in their content, relevance and professionalism. We highly recommend that these form the basis of decision making for the Wild Coast and note that they come out strongly in favour of eco-tourism as the most effective option for sustainable development to take place.



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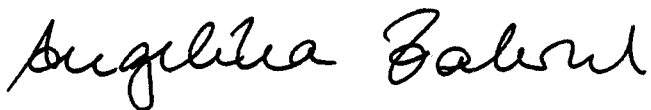
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Der BUND ist ein anerkannter Naturschutzverband nach § 59 Bundesnaturschutzgesetz. Spenden sind steuerabzugsfähig. Erbschaften und Vermächtnisse an den BUND sind von der Erbschaftsteuer befreit. Wir informieren Sie gerne.

We also express concern at reports that human rights violations and damage to the social fabric might have occurred due to the possibility of mining, and that the threat of mining activity has been reported to be putting a damper on community initiatives based on these sustainable methods of development.

South Africa is a role model for the triumph of democratic process and environmental care. I urge the government of South Africa to uphold this good record by making every effort to conserve the natural heritage of the Wild Coast and to assure the integrity of the Pondoland Centre of Endemism, as an asset for its people as well as for the benefit of local communities. I do this by referring to the South African Constitution and National Environmental Management Act as well as to the Convention on Biological Diversity which South Africa has signed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Angelika Zahrnt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Angelika Zahrnt
President