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Environment minister Prakash Javadekar to meet MPs to decide fate of western ghats

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Anubhuti Vishnoi, ET Bureau Jul 31, 2015, 05:18AM IST

Tags: Western Ghats | tamil nadu | Prakash Javadekar | Kasturirangan Committee | environment minister

NEW DELHI: Ahead of its deadline for taking a final decision on the issue of Western Ghats by August end, environment minister Prakash Javadekar is set to hold a round of meetings with near 70 MPs from the stakeholder states. Javadekar will chair a meeting with the MPs from the Western Ghats states on August 3 in the Parliament to get a final round of feedback before deciding on the exact contours of the ecologically sensitive area.



(Environment minister Prakash Javadekar...)



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Top officials said the move was being made to build political consensus ahead of the declaration of ESA — a rather contentious issue in these states. The meeting with MPs follows the review meeting that was held in early July with environment ministers from Western Ghats region. Javadekar had then said that the Centre's efforts were directed at protecting and preserving the "sanctity and environment of Western Ghats as envisaged by Kasturirangan Committee" and also to ensure sustainable development in the region by providing livelihood opportunities.

It has been indicated that the government will notify the ESA keeping the view of states in mind, permitting certain developmental activities but also ensuring that "excessive commercial mining and polluting industries will not be permitted in the region". Javadekar had said after the July 7 meeting that the government will finalise the decision on Western Ghats by August-end. Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are the stakeholder states that stand to be affected by the Kasturirangan report.

The Javadekar-led ministry has given the states more than a year to conduct 'ground truthing' vis-a-vis the Kasturirangan and Madhav Gadgil reports. The High Level Working Group headed by K Kasturirangan had in its 2013 report recommended to the environment ministry that 37 per cent of the Western Ghats area should be declared as ecologically sensitive.

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