

e-Petition #1

Dear Mr. Ratan Tata and Mr. Shri Naveen Patanaik,

The people of Orissa state are very fortunate to be caretakers of one of nature's grandest spectacles: the annual arribadas of the Olive Ridley Sea Turtle. I appreciate the efforts you have made to protect this ancient and marvelous species, most notably the establishment of the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary and the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary. These protected areas are necessary to assure safe breeding and nesting areas as well as the turtles' source of food during their massive gatherings and arribadas.

The protected zones are not, however sufficient to ensure the survival of the Olive Ridley. The species is keenly sensitive to illumination, pollution, ship traffic and many physical characteristics of their nesting beaches. These could all be dramatically affected by construction of the Dhamra Port.

In addition to potentially catastrophic consequences for the Olive Ridleys, the Dhamra Port also threatens the well-being and livelihoods of local fishermen and their families who depend on the health of the fragile mangrove and marine ecosystems. Inevitably, pollution from the Dhamra Port would impact the health of these critical ecosystems that are nurseries for a wealth of marine species.

I urge TATA Steel to apply the Precautionary Principle as required by the Global Compact and to uphold its reputation for environmental responsibility by relocating its port facility to a site where it will not threaten endangered species, critical ecosystems and fishermen's livelihoods.

Likewise, I urge the Orissa government to continue to protect the Olive Ridley Sea Turtle and preserve the livelihoods of local fishing communities by revoking its approval for the Dhamra Port.

Please give your immediate attention to this matter of urgent global concern.

Sincerely,

Petitioner

Reply to e-Petition #1

We acknowledge with thanks your letter to Mr. Ratan Tata regarding the development of the Dhamra Port in Orissa, India. Please be rest assured that we are as concerned about the local environment and the marine turtles as you are, and have taken and will be taking further steps to ensure that we do not adversely impact the environment. We trust you are aware of the critical industrial development and expansion needs in India, and as one of the largest conglomerates with a respected social responsibility charter, we are helping fulfil this demand, bringing benefits to countless people in the country, without compromising our commitment to the protection of environment.

Please note that The Dhamra Port Company Limited and its parent Companies-Tata Steel and L&T are cognizant of their responsibility to society & environment and compliance with the law. Any developments will take place in full recognition of the protected area status of the Gahirmatha Sanctuary. Indeed, we hope to produce a management strategy that offsets the current high loss of turtles as incidental by catch from fishing which is taking place not because of any port activity either at Dhamra which is yet to start or at Paradip to its south which is already a busy port.

We are in the process of determining the best approaches to environmental management, and are being advised by IUCN - the World Conservation Union, in the matter. We would like to take an approach under the guidance of IUCN which would not only ensure that the Port does not have any adverse effect on turtles but also addresses the issue of conservation of turtles in a holistic manner including issues like the livelihood of fishermen.

Again, we thank you for your concern, one we also share, and trust you understand our needs here in India to balance the developmental needs of our people while adequately caring for our environment.

Sincerely yours,

Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

Chief Executive Officer

The Dhamra Port Company Limited