CARB Board Chair Mary Nichols

California Air Resources Board

1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

 August 29, 2019

Dear California Air Resource Board,

The undersigned group of foundations supporting climate justice solutions in California and globally, urge California regulator Air Resources Board to NOT endorse its Tropical Forest Standard (TFS) or any other similar carbon offset program. REDD offsets lack environmental and social integrity and fail to address the root causes of deforestation.

In the face of the climate crisis, and as a state with one of the largest sources of dirty oil and worst air quality in the nation, signing off on a policy that provides offsets to polluters, and which cannot guarantee the granting of Free Prior and Informed Consent of the Indigenous Peoples whose territories are directly affected by this policy, is a deceiving proposition.

Offsets are not reductions.  Rather, offsets offer extractive industries (oil, gas, mining, energy, aviation) a cheap way to buy their way out, instead of reducing emissions at source.

REDD is a globalist bandwagon idea that is resulting in human rights violations and land grabs. In addition to these blatant abuses, and after being heavily promoted for over a decade, deforestation only continues to expand at alarming rates.  The market-based strategy that panders to the interests of industry (i.e. buy offsets instead of cut emissions). REDD is neither effective nor ecologically prudent. On the contrary, it is a disastrous false solution.

What is actually needed is to hold polluters accountable, protect Indigenous Peoples rights to their territories, divest from the heavily subsidized extractive industries, and invest in a Just Transition and regenerative economy that fosters life.

As foundations who prioritize funding the grassroots, where real change happens, we are further critical of the top-down agendas that favor the interests of extractive industry. It concerns us that proponents of the TFS, like the Environmental Defense Fund, has had a strong hand in the very act of crafting the language of the TFS, at the expense of grassroots communities’ meaningful input on how to truly address the climate crisis, and that company names signing off on it include a pairing of certain misguided Big Greens and Big Industry.

To take real leadership, the State of California needs to dramatically reduce emissions at source as well as reduce both consumption and import of fossil fuels; anything short of this is utterly irresponsible.

In conclusion, we call on Governor Newsom and the State of California to take the following actions: 1) Stop new fossil fuel projects, 2) Drop existing production, 3) Roll out strict setback limits. REJECT the TFS.

Do not create more public infrastructure to let the extractive industries continue with business as usual at this pivotal moment in history.  If you have any questions, please contact Sonja Swift at the Swift Foundation; sonja@swiftfoundation.org. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Swift Foundation

Grassroots International

Solidaire Network

Fund for Democratic Communities

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

Tikva Grassroots Empowerment Fund

EDGE Funders Alliance

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

Satterberg Foundation

The 11th Hour Project

Chorus Foundation

Hidden Leaf Foundation

Ceres Trust