

August 29, 2019

California Air Resources Board,

We need to act like our house is on fire because it is.

As a Registered Professional Forester by the Board of Forestry, I know the importance of conservation and have a strong understanding of the need to keep a balance between forests and human demands; including those of forest-dependent communities and indigenous people.

There is a global landgrab and we need stronger standards to protect communities from losing their historical tenure and cultural land rights. Having stricter standards like California's Tropical Forest Standard only helps strengthening requirements to protect communities. Ignoring the issues only makes it worse. Forest-reliant communities are some of the poorest people in the world and, as global demands on forests and forest products grow, these people will become further and further marginalized. This is a call to action and take steps in the right direction for funding community-based conservation.

I balance my time as a forester in California and as a forester in many developing counties in Africa, Asia and Latin America. I see there is a much greater need to aid and assist communities and forests in countries less developed than our own. Tropical forests are the world's lungs and create the most biodiverse places on the planet. Forest conservation, strengthening forest-user rights, climate action and sustainable development can be achieved through this Standard if done right. It won't be easy, but it is much more important to act than to watch our house burn.

I walk, bike and use public transit when I can, but living in California I cause emissions - from the food I eat to where I get my energy. We all do. I need to purchase carbon credits to offset the emissions I create every day. I ask that the Board help supply consumers in California with the highest standards possible, so that communities and forests are protected and that offsets generated create the greatest good for the greatest number in the longest run. Because of climate-induced wildfires California forests are emitting more carbon than they can sequester, and though we should always inset before offsetting, it is unrealistic that the fifth largest economy in the world can inset emissions with our current technology and with land-base we have. We need to reach out to partners around the world to help reduce our global emissions and, whenever possible, aid those who are most affected by climate change – this is climate justice.

I urge the Board to take climate action now and steps toward a carbon neutral future before it is too late. Please endorse the Tropical Forest Standard so that we can begin the process of creating a standard that works for all Californians and supports our brothers and sisters abroad. I am happy to provide expert advice on creating something that works for everyone.

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