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for record only



September 9, 2019

Mary Nichols, Chair
California Air Resources Board
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Cc: CARB members

Dear Ms. Nichols,

As a fellow Californian, I write asking for your support on a critically important issue, the Tropical Forest Standard (TFS), currently being considered by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). The Tropical Forest Standard is a blueprint for allowing tropical forest protection initiatives to be included in the state's cap-and-trade system — and a pivotal step forward in stopping climate change. Tropical forests store most of the world's carbon, and science has proven time and again that protecting them is necessary to stop the worst effects of climate change, from rising temperatures to destructive storms.

Research shows California is particularly vulnerable: Wildfires here are 500 percent larger due to climate change.

Perhaps more than any other state in the U.S., Californians know that climate change is the most important issue of our time: Its brutal effects are already destroying our property and costing lives. CARB's endorsement of the Standard will not only cement California as a trailblazer leading the global fight to stop the climate breakdown, it will provide tangible benefits to Californians contending with devastating wildfires, droughts and heatwaves that grow more violent each year.

Now, more than ever, we cannot wait for national action on climate change. We need subnational governments and leaders like yourself to move these efforts forward in the face of national inaction. This standard could set the standard for the entire world, if adopted and position California as the leader on climate change.

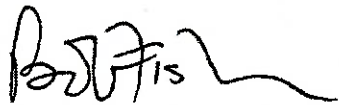
Why tropical forests? It's simple: Without them, we have no hope of winning this fight. Tropical forests sequester carbon from the atmosphere and account for one-third of emissions reductions needed to mitigate climate change. Despite their outsize contribution, they receive less than 2 percent of global climate funding. We need concrete efforts to keep these forests standing — and we need to start by getting the Tropical Forest Standard approved, which could unlock \$1B over the next 10 years for tropical forest conservation and be a powerful catalyst for global governmental action.

Opponents have falsely claimed that the Standard would take money out of California and would harm the indigenous communities that care for, and rely on, tropical forests around the world. These arguments fail on multiple levels. Under the Standard, more than 90 percent of economic benefits under California's system would remain in the state, allowing only a small portion of offsets to be fulfilled outside of California. From its inception, the Standard has featured safeguards to ensure that indigenous communities are consulted and protected, provisions vocally endorsed at the CARB meeting last November and through subsequent written correspondence by leading indigenous groups including the Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin (COICA) and the Meso-American Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB).

We are at a pivotal moment in history — one that will impact not only generations of Californians, but the entire global population. On September 19, CARB has a singular opportunity: To adopt the Tropical Forest Standard and make a significant, positive and lasting impact on our planet, and on billions of people already suffering the consequences of climate change. We need your support to make this happen.

Please contact me if you have further questions.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Fisher', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Bob Fisher
Director, Conservation International Board of Directors