

Managua, November 22nd, 2015

California Air Resources Board
Board Members

Dear Board Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB for its initials in Spanish), to express support for the regulatory process initiated by California to bring offset credits from jurisdictional REDD+ programs into the California Cap and Trade Program, and the workshop and comprehensive Staff White Paper published to support this process.

The AMPB brings together indigenous authorities and community forest managers with an influence in a large portion of the forest ecosystems stretching from Mexico to Panama. 60% of our region's forests have achieved formal recognition of indigenous or community rights over forests. The AMPB participated at the ARB workshop in Sacramento, California on October 28, 2015, which reviewed the ARB staff paper and gathered public input to inform California's political process.

In indigenous and rural communities, there is considerable concern about the development of programs that do not guarantee rights. Precisely for this reason, the AMPB's involvement in REDD processes emphasizes the importance of territorial rights as a critical institutional foundation for long term forest governance, and offers our rights-based experiences as key lessons for addressing deforestation both in our jurisdictions and around the world. We consider REDD to be an important opportunity to strengthen our rights to manage and protect our forests, as well as engage in a larger discussion of inclusive sustainable development with our national governments and ensure representation in international climate change processes, based on the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). These fundamental goals guide our collaboration with the Governors' Climate and Forests task force (GCF) to develop strong frameworks that ensure social safeguards in jurisdictional REDD+ programs, including in the Mexican GCF states where some of our territories are located.

We are confident that the State of California's Cap and Trade policy seeks emission reductions based on the recognition of, and respect for, the rights of indigenous and forest communities. In this regard we applaud this effort and are supportive of California's evaluation of the technical guidance provided by the REDD Offset Working group (ROW) to ensure essential social safeguards, in particular the full implementation of territorial rights, as a key component of guaranteeing robust, high quality offsets.

We would like to offer our support to continue to work with ARB staff as issues of social and environmental safeguards in the California program are addressed through future workshops.

Sincerely,



Levi Sucre Romero
Mesoamerican Alliance of People and Forests (AMPB)
Coordinator