

Hon. Governor Kathleen Hochul
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

October 31st, 2023

The undersigned organizations representing environmental interests in New York State and internationally are writing to respectfully urge you to sign the New York Tropical Deforestation-Free Procurement Act (S5921/A6872 Krueger/Zebrowski) into law. As you may know, deforestation is one of the largest drivers of climate change. Currently an estimated more than 15% of all greenhouse gas emissions result from deforestation and forest degradation, which is a major contributor to climate change.

With the near unanimous call of the international scientific community to change, its more apparent than ever that New York must act. To that end, this bill, if enacted, will ensure any business providing goods or services to New York do not contribute to tropical deforestation or forest degradation and the associated abuses of Indigenous Peoples and the local communities in tropical forested regions. By ensuring that the products New York state government buy do not contribute to the destruction of Earth's most vital ecosystems, New York will begin to slow the impacts associated with climate change.

To be clear, this Act does not place any restrictions on private companies that do not do business with the state of New York. And this Act, being limited in scope to commodities that originate in the tropics, does not impose any restrictions on industrial logging in boreal and temperate forests. This Act simply prohibits the state of New York from contributing to deforestation and degradation in the tropics through its procurement contracts.

Tropical deforestation and degradation is driven primarily by the clearing or industrial logging of forests for the grazing of cattle and the cultivation of soy, palm oil, wood products, cocoa, coffee, and rubber. It is often linked to human rights abuses including violation of indigenous land tenure and rights, particularly with respect to human rights defenders.

While the focus of the bill is on curbing environmentally harmful business practices, the legislation, if enacted, not only will be beneficial to New York's fight against climate change but will have a direct and positive impact on the stimulation of New York business, particularly the small and medium sized businesses that drives job creation. The bill is also an economic development initiative as it creates incentives for small, medium sized, women and minority owned as well as companies that source goods using New York state products via a 10% price differential preference program.

In short, this bill is a win-win for New York, for New York-based businesses, for the global climate and for human rights.

This summer has clearly demonstrated that inaction is not an option. In June, the air quality in New York was so poor that that Department of Environmental Conservation issued an Air Quality Health Advisory, strongly recommending millions of New Yorkers to remain inside for 9

days. And in July, New York experienced storms with record setting precipitation of up to 8.13 inches in the worst hit areas, resulting in destruction of infrastructure, such as Route 28 in the Adirondacks and the Amtrak and MTA railways along the Hudson River, costing taxpayers millions of dollars.

Having passed the legislature with a landslide bi-partisan majority, the New York Tropical Deforestation-Free Procurement Act is a heartening sign that New York continues its commitment to combat climate change and pursue environmental justice everywhere.

We respectfully urge Governor Hochul sign this critical bill into law.

Signed,

350Brooklyn

ActionAid USA

Amazon Watch

ARAYARA.org

Asia Indigenous Peoples Network on
Extractive Industries and Energy (AIPNEE)

Canopée

Center for International Environmental Law

CESTAS/Friends of the Earth El Salvador

Coherence Lab

Dandelions NYC

Dogwood Alliance

Environmental Advocates NY

Environmental Investigation Agency US

Environmental Paper Network

ERA/FoE Nigeria

Farmschoolnyc

Federation of Native Border Communities
of Putumayo

Forum Ökologie & Papier

Friends of the Earth United States

Global Witness

Human Rights Watch

If Not Us Then Who?

Indonesian Forum on the Environment
(WALHI)

Kaiāulu.earth

Last Tree Laws

LBH ANGSANA

Leefmilieu

MapHubs, Incorporated

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Mighty Earth

Milieudéfensie - Friends of the Earth
Netherlands

National Wildlife Federation

Network for Social Justice and Human
Rights in Brazil

New York Communities for Change

New York State Council of Churches

Norcross Wildlife Foundation

North American Indigenous Center of New York
NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council)
NY Public Interest Research Group
private citizen
ProPurus, Peru
Rainforest Action Network
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Size of Wales

Slow Factory
Sustainable Development Institute
Sustainable Development Institute, Liberia
Talent des femmes autochtones et rurales
Tarcísio Feitosa da Silva 2006 GOLDMAN PRIZE WINNER Forests South & Central America Brazil
TIAA-Divest!
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
Women's Earth and Climate Action Network