



The Brazilian NGOs joint manifest against the proposed changes in Brazilian Forest Code

The Brazilian commitment to reduce the GHG emissions announced in COP 15 is threatened by the proposed changes in the forest code voted by the Senate yesterday (06/12/2011). President Dilma Rousseff can reject such changes by vetoing the proposal and therefore reaffirming the Brazilian contribution to climate change mitigation.

Thus, we organisations from Brazilian civil society attending the COP17, urge President Dilma Rousseff to veto the change in the forest code.

Context

Back in 2009, our President, and former Minister, Dilma Rousseff, announced to the world Brazil's emission reduction goals, a cut ranging from 36.1 to 38.9% (~1.1 billion tons of CO_{2e}) in comparison to a Business as Usual Scenario, by 2020. The main strategy to achieve such ambitious goal is the reduction of deforestation, which is fully supported by the environmental legislation in Brazil, primarily the forest code. This code defines rules for the use of forest resources and protection of forests and lands in Brazil.

Unfortunately, we are about to see Brazil make the most serious step back on forest protection in decades.

After strong pressure from conservative agribusiness sector, a bill which proposes significant changes to the Brazilian Forest Code was voted at the Brazilian Senate **yesterday, Tuesday, 06 of December 2011.**

Despite of the alert and recommendations made by scientists, environmentalists, attorneys, social movements our congressmen are about to sentence our forests to a disastrous future. The new proposal was approved by the Senate and now will be voted by the Deputy Chamber.

Last week we heard with disappointment our Government stating at COP 17 that the law will help Brazil to deliver its emission reduction goals.

Unfortunately, the truth is that those changes will lead into massive destruction of our forests and emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.

The main back steps of the new code are:



- Amnesty will be given to those who have illegally destroyed our forests before July 2008.
- The illegally deforested area to be restored will be reduced, threatening sensitive areas such as riparian zones and top of hills.
- Properties up to 400 hectares will be exempt from maintaining a minimum percentage of forested areas (80% for those located in the Amazon, 35% in savannas in the Amazon region, 20% in other regions - according to the current code).

Major consequences of the bill

- Unprotected lands could reach up to the area of Germany, Austria and Italy altogether (79 million hectares)[\[1\]](#)
- Up to 29 gigatonnes of CO₂ could potentially be emitted and/or not sequestered, equivalent to about 15 times Brazilian annual greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduction of up to 50% of the restoration of river banks will impact more than 50% of the whole watershed of the country.[\[2\]](#)
- Brazilian greenhouse gas emission reduction goals would not be met (36.1% to 38.9%) by 2020.

Implications to UNFCCC negotiations

- Efforts to develop robust REDD+ mechanisms under UNFCCC and at national level could be undermined
- Tropical forest countries could be discouraged to develop their REDD+ and sustainable development policy frameworks
- Global efforts to reduce emissions could be significantly jeopardized
- Brazil's leadership on biodiversity conservation and sustainable and low carbon development is threatened

We urge the Government of Brazil to restate their strong commitment to reduce deforestation and GHG emissions by rejecting the proposed changes in the forest code, particularly those regarding the amnesty of illegal deforestation and the reduction of minimum percentage of forested areas in private properties.



We remain committed to continue supporting the Brazilian government to pursue a sustainable and low carbon development in line with biodiversity conservation, ensuring a healthy and prosperous future for our present and future generations.

This manifest is signed by the organisations that belong to the Climate Observatory (OC) initiative, which gathers more than 30 Brazilian NGOs, represented at the UNFCCC COP 17 by:

Amazon Institute of People and the Environment (IMAZON)

Boticário Group Foundation for Nature Protection

Conservation International (CI-Brazil)

Coordenation of the Indegenous Organizations of Brazilian Amazon (COIAB)

Greenpeace-Brasil

Amazonian Working Group (GTA)

Institute for conservation and Sustainable Development of Amazonas (IDESAM)

Center of Life Institute (ICV)

Amazon Environmental Research Institute (IPAM)

Society for Wildlife Research and Environmental Education (SPVS)

World Wildlife Fund (WWF Brazil)

Non OC members, supporting this manifest:350.org Brazil

Brazilian Fund to Biodiversity (Funbio)

Institute for Forest Management and Agricultural Certification (IMAFLOA)

Vitae Civilis

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