

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

June 2024

The undersigned organizations representing environmental interests in New York State and internationally are writing to respectfully urge you to sign the New York Tropical Rainforest Economic and Environmental Sustainability Act (S.8898/A9711 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.

We know that inaction is not an option: last year, 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.

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 local communities in tropical forested regions. By ensuring that the products the New York state government buys do not contribute to the destruction of Earth's most vital ecosystems, New York will begin to slow the impacts associated with climate change. Governor Hochul chose to prioritize climate mitigation and forest systems this year by directing \$47 million to plant 25 million trees. We ask that she continue to lead by these values and use the procurement power of NYS to prevent tropical deforestation.

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 forests outside the tropics. This Act simply prohibits the state of New York from contributing to deforestation and forest degradation in the tropics through its procurement contracts. This year's bill contends with and adapts to the Governor's critiques from last year, making this legislation an even more practical choice for New Yorkers.

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 and coffee. 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, will not only 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 drive 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.

Having passed the legislature with a landslide bi-partisan majority, the New York Tropical Rainforest Economic and Environmental Sustainability 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 to sign this critical bill into law.

Signed,

350 Brooklyn

ActionAid USA

Agency for Turkana Development Initiatives
(ATUDIS)

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

Better Food Foundation

Biodiversity Conservation Center

Brazilian Network for Social Justice and
Human Rights

Brighter Green

Build a Better Planet

Canopée

Friends of the Earth El Salvador

Citizens' Climate Lobby Brooklyn

Citizens' Climate Lobby New York State

Climate Change and Environmental Justice
Alliance

Climate Reality Project - Western NY
Chapter

Climate Reality Project Los Angeles

Climate Rights International

Coastal Research & Education Society of
Long Island, Inc

Coherence Lab

Color Brighton Green

Community Advocates for a Sustainable
Environment

Community Food Advocates

Justice Office of the Daughters of Wisdom

Deignan Institute for Earth and Spirit at Iona
University

Dominican Sisters in Committed
Collaboration

Endangered Species Coalition

Environmental Advocates NY

Environmental Investiagtion Agency

Environmental Paper Network

Friends of the Earth Nigeria

Farm School NYC

Federación de Comunidades Nativas de
Ucayali y Afluentes- FECONAU

Food & Water Watch NY

Food Revolution Network

For the Many

Forest Hills Green Team

Forest Trends

Forests Forever

Forum Ökologie & Papier

Fossil Free Tompkins

Friends of East Africa

Friends of the Earth International

Friends of the Earth Africa

Friends of the Earth Sierra Leone

Global Justice Ecology Project (GJEP)

Global Witness

Grassroots Environmental Education

GreenFaith

If Not Us Then Who?

Indigenous Environmental Network

Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the
Archipelago (Indonesia)

Indigenous Environmental Network

Indivisible Harlem

Jamaa Resource Initiatives

Jewish Climate Action Network NY Metro

Justice Committee of the Sisters of St.
Joseph of Carondelet Albany

KaiaUlu Council

Kerio Valley Community Organization
(KVCO)

Long Island Progressive Coalition NY

Lower East Side Ecology Center

Mercy for Animals

Mighty Earth

Milieudefensie - Friends of the Earth
Netherlands

Movement Rights

Mutasa Youth Forum and Empowerment
Trust

National Wildlife Federation

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

New Paltz Interfaith Earth Action

New York Public Interest Research Group
(NYPIRG)

New York State Council of Churches

New Yorkers for Clean Power

North American Indigenous Center of New
York

NY Climate Advocacy Project

NYC Audubon

Oceanic Preservation Society

Onondaga Audubon Center

People of Albany United for Safe Energy
(PAUSE)

Pivot Point

ProPurus, Peru

Rainforest Action Network

Re:wild

Rivers & Mountains GreenFaith

Seatuck Environmental Association

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter

Sierra Leone Land Alliance

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice
Team

Sisters of St. Joseph

Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester

Size of Wales

Slow Food New York State

WESPAC Foundation, Inc.

Social Compassion in Legislation

Western NY Drilling Defense

Society for Responsible Design

Wild Heritage

South Asian Fund for Education Scholarship
and Training Inc (SAFEST)

Womens Earth and Climate Action Network

South Bronx Unite

Zero Waste NYC

STAR Kampuchea (SK)

Stop NY Fracked Gas Pipeline

Sustainable Development Institute, Liberia

Sustainable Finger Lakes

Talent des femmes autochtones et rurales

The Climate Reality Project New York State
Chapters Coalition

The Long Island Conservancy

The Raven Corps

Think Zero

Third Act Upstate New York

Tompkins County Climate Protection
Initiative

WALHI/Friends of the Earth Indonesia

WALHI/Indonesian Forum on the
Environment (WALHI)