

**<IF AN ORGANIZATION, MUST BE ON LETTERHEAD>**

**Statement in Support of AB 572 (California Deforestation-Free Procurement Act)**

March XX, 2019

Dear Honorable Members of the California Legislature,

We write to express our support for Assembly Bill 572, the California Deforestation-Free Procurement Act, which will contribute to global efforts to end tropical deforestation by ensuring that entities contracting with the State of California do not contribute to tropical deforestation directly or through their supply chains.

Tropical forests cover roughly seven percent of the Earth's surface, but harbor close to 50 percent of all species on Earth; an estimated 18 million acres of forest, an area 1/5 the size of California, is lost every year due to human activities. Tropical deforestation is the third leading driver of global CO2 emissions.

The main driver of tropical deforestation is industrial-scale production of agricultural commodities known as "forest-risk commodities," including palm oil, soy, cattle, rubber, paper/pulp and timber. Products containing these commodities are widely consumed – making virtually all consumers inadvertently contributing to global tropical forest destruction.

Tropical deforestation in many countries is responsible for a significant portion of global greenhouse gas emission and is closely associated with violations of the land rights of Indigenous Peoples, exploitation of workers, forced labor and child labor, criminality and violence against land defenders, and illegal wildlife trafficking.

Many animal and plant species are lost to or on the edge of extinction due to tropical deforestation. Biologists believe if these trends are allowed to continue there will be a major mass extinction in tropical forests and the biodiverse ecosystem they hold. This loss of life is nowhere more apparent than in Indonesia where deforestation has cut orangutan populations by more than half over the last 15 years.

California is the fifth largest economy in the world and its purchasing power has significant market force. An outspoken leader in addressing the climate crisis, California plans to reduce the state's GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

AB 572 requires state contracts entered or renewed by January 1, 2021, that includes wholly or in part a forest-risk commodity to certify that the product has not contributed to tropical deforestation. The bill would also require those state contractors dealing with forest-risk commodities to have in place a NDPE policy.

We, the undersigned, respectfully encourage the members of the California Legislature to support the passage of AB 572 will extend California's environmental leadership to the protection of tropical forests and sends a crucial signal to global markets that destructive, commodity-driven deforestation will no longer be tolerated.

Sincerely,