



February 29, 2012

The Honorable Dilma Rousseff
President of Brazil
Palacio do Planalto
70150-900
Brasilia/DF, Brazil

By Email to Brazil and By Hand to the Embassy in
Washington

Dear Madam President,

As Presidents respectively of the Society for Conservation Biology and its Austral and Neotropical Section (Latin America and Caribbean), the world's largest international scientific society dedicated to advancing the science and practice of conserving Earth's biological diversity, we write to convey to you a Resolution of the Society urging you to veto amendments recently passed by the Senate that would weaken the Brazilian Forest Code and the protection it provides for the forests of Brazil.

Please consider the effect that your choice to veto these amendments or not will have on the Amazon, which is Brazil's and the world's most important carbon sequestration, air and water-processing terrestrial system. Consider also the effect that this will have when you open Rio+20 this June. Delegations from around the world will arrive to work under your guidance and leadership to provide better global information, investment and governance in order to more fully implement the international laws and other sustainable development commitments made in Rio twenty years ago.

Please consider that forest-dependent peoples now include not only several indigenous and non-indigenous peoples of the Amazon but also citizens of small island nation-states that depend on a healthy Amazon to not give off greenhouse gases, in order to avoid being taken over by sea level rise. The world has watched with gratitude and admiration as the government of Brazil, using sophisticated satellite systems, has enforced with increasing vigilance the Forest Code that keeps large blocks of forest and riversheds protected from most harm except for severe droughts. The best defense against climate driven heat and drought for great forests is a combination of conserving them as intact forests and reducing emissions and other human stressors that threaten their health.

Therefore, please accept our respectful offer to work with you and Brazilian scientific societies to review your Forest Code in light of modern science and to help develop truly sustainable ways to use those forests for the fair and growing benefit of Brazil so that it can present to Rio+20 a better vision for sustaining the world's forests.

Yours with great hope and respect,

Paul Beier

Mariana M. Vale

Paul Beier, Ph.D.
President
Society for Conservation Biology

Mariana M. Vale, Ph.D.
President Austral and Neotropical America Section
Society for Conservation Biology

Attached: SCB Resolution on the Forest Code of Brazil