

Friday, March 18, 2011

Via email:

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Derik Broekhoff
Vice President, Policy
Climate Action Reserve
523 W. Sixth Street, Suite 428
Los Angeles, CA 90014

Dear Mr. Broekhoff:

I understand that climate change is complicated, not just in terms of policy and politics, but in terms of the complex dynamics of forest management. You are in a position to make the world change with regards to the Forest Protocol, global warming and the carbon offset program. I'm not a lawyer or a scientist; I'm simply an independent journalist who has spent a large portion of her life studying this state. You may have read my recent editorial in the Sacramento Bee, <http://www.sacbee.com/2011/03/10/3463428/viewpoints-clear-cutting-forests.html>.

Many experts suggest that healthy (uneven-aged) forests provide ecological diversity, carbon storage and economic resilience for our state and country, and they do. According to Bill Libby, a UC Berkeley tree specialist, California's coastal redwoods and giant sequoias are best suited for sequestering carbon because of their size, rapid growth and durability. The longer a tree lives, the longer its carbon remains bottled up instead of reaching the atmosphere. Conversely, industry experts suggest that clear-cutting and tree farms provide jobs and the most efficient logging practices. New trees also absorb carbon. But the essential thrust of the conflict centers around one question: Does human short-term economic need come before the long-term health of all living things?

It's more of a moral choice than a scientific one. Balance is important. Humans by their nature have been entrusted with the care of our planet, and you are the person posed to make it better.

If I took you hiking all over the state, I might demonstrate the intrinsic value of our forests. Since I can't do that, I wish to speak a word for them. They are this nation's cathedrals and national monuments; where other countries have churches and pyramids, we have the giant sequoia and the redwood tree. There is nothing like the giant sequoia anywhere on the Earth. According to Dr. Reese Halter, not one in 80,000 tree species can be repeatedly struck by lightning and live for a millennium or two. The redwood tree is also the tallest known tree on Earth; it can reach up to 379 feet and soar well higher than the Statue of Liberty. I could detail every aspect of every tree and try to express each of its special qualities, beyond just its ability to sequester carbon.

But it comes down to special interests versus the needs of the community and the world as a whole, including those that have no voice. You've been entrusted with a great task, and you have the unique opportunity to preserve forests worldwide, if you keep clear-cutting out of your landmark policies.

I understand that you have to ameliorate the situation, and certainly, that's a difficult and challenging task. Still, I hope you will consider the long term health of your community, your legacy and the amazing opportunity that you have to keep our trees standing, for one and all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Deanna Wulff

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