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6 FOREST CONSERVATION IN THE FIGHT

7 AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

8 Thursday, May 12, 2022

9 House of Representatives,

10 Committee on Foreign Affairs,

11 Washington, D.C.

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15 The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:12 a.m., in Room
16 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Gregory Meeks [chairman
17 of the committee] presiding.

18 Chairman Meeks. The Committee on Foreign Affairs will come
19 to order. And without objection, the Chair is authorized to
20 declare a recess of the Committee at any point, and all Members
21 will have five days to submit statements, extraneous materials,
22 and questions for the record, subject to the length, limitation,
23 and the rules.

24 To insert something into the record, please have your staff
25 email the previously mentioned address, or contact full committee
26 staff.

27 And as a reminder, for Members participating remotely,
28 please keep your video function on at all times, even when you're
29 not recognized by the Chair.

30 And Members are responsible for muting and unmuting
31 themselves. Consistent with House rules, staff will only mute
32 Members as appropriate, when they are not under recognition, to
33 eliminate background noise.

34 I see that we have a quorum. And I now recognize myself
35 for opening remarks.

36 Exactly one year ago today, this Committee held a hearing
37 on the threat of climate change to our planet, it's ecosystems
38 and our livelihoods. And with Special Envoy John Kerry as our
39 guest, we were able to examine the United States' role in rallying
40 global support ahead of COP26 in Glasgow.

41 In Glasgow the United States was able to keep ambition high

42 across a broad spectrum of challenge related to climate change.

43 As a result, the world was able to move the ball forward on several
44 critical issues, including mitigation, adaptation, and finance.

45 And I want to thank our witnesses and members of civil society
46 for being here today, and for their work surrounding the event
47 as well.

48 A year seems like a long time ago, and global politics have
49 changed. And an unjustified war of aggression by a nuclear power
50 has upended the postwar settlement, and rekindled threats that
51 were thought left in the last century.

52 In 2021, we saw the global economy rebound. And it rebound
53 rapidly and unevenly, along with CO2 emissions. And according
54 to the International Energy Agency, coal accounted for over 40
55 percent of the overall growth in global CO2 emissions in 2021,
56 compounded by the high natural gas prices.

57 However, the planet doesn't care for geopolitics or prices.

58 On the contrary, our oceans, and forest, and tundra, are being
59 reshaped and destroyed at a frightening pace.

60 As stewards of this earth, it is our duty to take action
61 before the damage we're inflicting becomes irreversible.
62 Further generations should not be forced to inherit a global
63 crisis of our own making.

64 So, today we are taking the time to examine the role of force
65 in the fight against climate change and its worst effects. We're

66 also going to discuss proposed solutions to slow down
67 deforestation, stop illegal logging, and incentivize the
68 protection of existing primary forests.

69 Forests are essential to the good health of our planet, and
70 by extension, our very survival. They are carbon six, holding
71 more carbon than is produced annually by humans.

72 They're a home. Home to more than three quarters of the
73 world's life on land, representing delicate biodiversity. They
74 are living spaces for humanity. Over one billion people around
75 the world rely on forests for shelter and livelihoods, including
76 60 million indigenous people.

77 When these cathedrals for nature are under threat, or burned,
78 or turned into agricultural land, these livelihoods are under
79 threat. Biodiversity is under threat, and that carbon is
80 released into the atmosphere.

81 However, when we protect forests, they represent a solution
82 to combating, even reversing climate change. And this was the
83 goal of the UK government leading in Glasgow, a commitment to
84 end deforestation by 2030.

85 Even China has signed onto the pledge. So, the United States
86 has a role to play in this ambitious endeavor. Indeed, the
87 difficulty is in the follow through. The devil is always in the
88 details.

89 Missing from earlier attempts to halt the drivers of

90 deforestation were important factors, including indigenous
91 voices who are directly impacted by deforestation. The solutions
92 are not one size fits all. Sometimes simply allowing and enabling
93 those with the most experience, and those with the most to lose,
94 will help, and indeed lead the process.

95 I'll stop there. And I'll turn to Mr. McCaul for his opening
96 remarks.

97 Mr. McCaul. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank
98 Majority Leader Hoyer for being here today, and talking about
99 your AMAZON21 Bill, and the Natural Resources Ranking Member
100 Westerman, for joining us to discuss your work to address
101 deforestation.

102 As the Ranking Member of this Committee, I've had the
103 opportunity to travel to Africa and Latin America, and I've seen
104 the importance of conservation and preserving our environmental
105 environment first hand.

106 This Committee has an important role to play in conserving
107 the environment, and that includes forests, marine sanctuaries,
108 and endangered species around the world.

109 Since my early days of serving in Congress, I've been a member
110 of the International Conservation Caucus, one of the largest and
111 most bipartisan caucuses in Congress.

112 Conservation is a logical solution in addressing climate
113 change. It's been championed by Republicans for over a century,

114 all the way back to Teddy Roosevelt.

115 He understood that we must protect our environment in
116 sustainability, and manage our natural resources before it's too
117 late. And I've been proud to have advanced bipartisan
118 conservation efforts here in Congress.

119 I've supported Congressman Chabot's Tropical Forest and
120 Coral Reef Conservation Reauthorization Act, and former Chairman
121 Royce's legislation supporting a conservation area in southern
122 Africa, the DELTA Act.

123 I'm also the original cosponsor of Ranking Member
124 Westerman's Trillion Trees Act. The United States has, and will
125 continue to play an important role in preventing deforestation.

126 And Mr. Chairman, I think we both have the same goal here.

127 In the last five years alone, over \$2 billion has been provided
128 by Congress to protect critical landscapes, and empower
129 communities to manage their own resources.

130 But, there are other tools on the table aside from
131 traditional foreign aid. For instance, engaging in debt for
132 nature swaps and debt buyback programs, the United States is
133 helping preserve land across the globe.

134 The U.S. Development Finance Corporation has an important
135 role to play as well. To engage the private sector and advance
136 new innovations.

137 Unfortunately, these efforts are under kept by the maligned

138 activities of the People's Republic of China. China accounts
139 for nearly a third of the global emissions.

140 In fact, the PRC's emissions grew four times more than what
141 the U.S. reduced. Today, China emits more than the entire
142 developed world.

143 CCP General Xi Jinping has said China only intends to become
144 carbon neutral by 2060, a full decade after other major economies.

145 We cannot wait decades hoping the CCP will be a reliable
146 partner in addressing climate change. And we must also not be
147 afraid to call them out on this.

148 Their search for rosewood, an endangered hardwood used in
149 traditional Chinese furniture has devastated the forests of
150 Madagascar and the Mekong region. We also must stop illegal
151 logging.

152 We must decrease demand while increasing U.S. options on
153 the global market for lumber, agriculture, energy, and critical
154 minerals. This will decrease global emissions as the U.S. does
155 it more efficiently and cleaner.

156 America's a world leader in reducing carbon emissions,
157 reducing emissions more than the next seven countries combined.

158 And by 2030, over 90 percent of global emissions will come from
159 outside the United States.

160 I would have to say that America's climate policy should
161 be based on America's resources, innovation, and our ability to

162 compete to reduce global emissions.

163 As I said, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Leader, we all have the
164 same goal here. I'm intrigued by the idea of the rain forest.

165 I've often said they are the lines of the world. And whatever
166 we can do to help preserve the lines of the world, our children
167 will be better, and their children will be better off.

168 And so with that, I yield back.

169 Chairman Meeks. Thank you, Mr. Keating. We'll now hear
170 from the Chair and the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee that
171 has oversight on climate and the environment.

172 We'll start with Chairman Keating, we now recognize for one
173 minute.

174 Mr. Keating. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I thank the
175 Leader, and Congressman Westerman, for being here today.

176 There are many issues that the clock has already ticked on.

177 And our environment is in a short period of time to deal with
178 these.

179 This is an important bill, because it takes the organization
180 and the power of the state to take action, and to prioritize,
181 and have some oversight over, you know, where the projects that
182 are working, that will work, that will save ourselves, will take
183 place.

184 I just want to make one note of the deforestation issue that
185 occurs in many areas, because it's going to be affected directly

186 by our Ukraine war.

187 Forty percent of the fertilizer in this world comes from
188 Belarus and Russia. There's an enormous crisis right now on
189 fertilizer. This is going to expand.

190 And I'm afraid that the slash and burn type tactics that,
191 or practices that are used for fertilizing for these countries,
192 it's only going to expand. And it will expand in the worst places
193 possible.

194 So, Mr. Chairman, I would say, this is the time that's even
195 crisis on crisis that's occurring with this. And this is why
196 I support this bill and would love to see it move forward
197 expeditiously.

198 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

199 Chairman Meeks. I now recognize Representative Steve
200 Chabot for one minute.

201 Mr. Chabot. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for holding
202 this hearing today. I want to thank Mr. Hoyer and Mr. Westerman
203 for being here.

204 And thank the Ranking Member for his kind remarks about the
205 legislation which we have cosponsored in the House, along with
206 Mr. Sherman, my Democratic colleague, and Mr. Portman and Chair
207 Brown over in the Senate.

208 We've been pushing this for a long time, it's the Tropical
209 Forest and Coral Reef Conservation Reauthorization Act. It

210 passed this Committee in a bipartisan basis this past year. And
211 I'd like to focus my attention during the course of the hearing
212 on that to some degree.

213 We do also have, as I'm sure the Chair knows, we've got the
214 Conference Committee. So, some of us are going to have to go
215 over on that. And so we maybe in and out of here. And I know
216 many of the members are participating virtually today.

217 But, thank you for holding this hearing. We'd love to get
218 that legislation across the finish line and get it passed into
219 law if at all possible.

220 I yield back.

221 Chairman Meeks. Thank you, Mr. Chabot. And today we have
222 two panels with very distinguished witnesses.

223 And of course on our first panel, we'll start with the very
224 distinguished Majority Leader of the House, Steny Hoyer, from
225 the great state of Maryland, who has been a long time leader in
226 international climate space, and more importantly, a driving
227 force behind efforts in this Congress to combat deforestation.

228 And this is highlighted by his work on AMAZON21, which we
229 will discuss very shortly. And I want to thank him for taking
230 time from his schedule to be before our Committee today.

231 And I also welcome the Ranking Member of the House Committee
232 on Natural Resources, Bruce Westerman, from the great state of
233 Arkansas.

234 Ranking Member Westerman's work on Natural Resources
235 Committee underscores the connection between domestic and
236 international policy in this space. And we also appreciate you
237 being here, Mr. Ranking Member.

238 I now recognize the Majority Leader for his remarks.

239 STATEMENTS OF HON. STENY HOYER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM
240 THE STATE OF MARYLAND, AND MAJORITY LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF
241 REPRESENTATIVES; AND HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
242 CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ARKANSAS, AND RANKING MEMBER, HOUSE
243 COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
244

245 STATEMENT OF HON. STENY HOYER

246 Mr. Hoyer. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for having
247 this hearing, but, more importantly, thank you for your statement
248 and your commitment to the objectives that we, as Mr. McCaul said,
249 all share. Mr. Chabot has said that as well.

250 And I want to thank Mr. Keating for his leadership on this.

251 Mr. Cicilline, thank you for being here and your work, and
252 Ms. Manning, for being here.

253 Let me start, Mr. Chairman, with the fact that this bill
254 has a very simple proposition. And that proposition is, if we
255 need to buy fertilizer, and we need to buy oil, and we need to
256 buy coal, or we need to buy some other source, we expect to have
257 that taken out of the land or the mine and given to us, and we,
258 in turn, pay for it.

259 The problem we have with the forest is the farmer who lives
260 next door to the rainforest and who may want another 10 acres
261 to farm, so he or she can support their family, their incentive
262 is to take that rainforest out of the ground. The problem is

263 the resource that we get from that rainforest is oxygen, which
264 allows us to live. And we do not want him or her, or the
265 government, to take it out of the ground.

266 So, in a system that is incentivized by being able to support
267 one's self, and therefore, get money in return for their product,
268 we take the oxygen, but we don't pay for it. So, this is not
269 charity. This is not foreign aid. This is you have something
270 of value that you give us to us every day by having those trees
271 in the ground, and we want you to keep them in the ground. So,
272 the challenge is, how do we incentivize? How do we make that
273 farmer able to support himself and his family or, frankly, that
274 government be able to support itself, as opposed to selling it
275 for wood, housing, whatever?

276 And that is what this bill seeks to do. So, Mr. Chairman,
277 I thank you for holding this hearing and allowing me to speak
278 on an issue that has been close to my heart for a very long time.

279 I started talking about this 20 years ago, and I am upset with
280 myself that I didn't pursue it more vigorously.

281 Protecting the rainforest, and by extension, the health of
282 our planet. Absorbing vast quantities of greenhouse gases,
283 natural carbon sinks -- such as rainforests, mangroves,
284 peatlands, wetlands -- serve, as Mr. McCaul said, the Earth's
285 lungs. Without lungs, we die.

286 Their well-being is inextricably linked, therefore, to that

287 of humanity. In recent decades, however, deforestation has
288 destroyed swaths, millions of acres, of these critical lands --
289 worsening our climate crisis while simultaneously removing one
290 of our greatest natural tools to address it.

291 It is because of deforestation that Brazil and Indonesia
292 are among the world's top 10 emitters of carbon. Indeed, the
293 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world's leading
294 climate scientific authority, has found that destruction of
295 natural carbon sinks accounts for as much as a quarter of the
296 world's total greenhouse gas emissions -- rivaling or perhaps
297 exceeding China.

298 We need to take immediate and decisive action to protect
299 these ecosystems. Our global effort to combat the climate crisis
300 depends upon it. The future of the planet depends on it. The
301 survival and success of humanity, ultimately, depends on it.

302 At the COP26 conference, to which the chairman referred,
303 in Glasgow last year, President Biden joined the leaders of 100
304 other nations in an historic pledge to end deforestation by the
305 end of the decade.

306 Those of us who live in the so-called industrialized world
307 use what is in the non-industrialized world -- Brazil, of course,
308 is both -- we use their product. We don't see it and we don't
309 pay for it. That is what this bill is about -- incentivizing
310 monetarily the retaining of these forests which we so badly need.

311 AMAZON21 -- by the way, AMAZON is a wonderful acronym that
312 I can hardly ever remember -- but, just for your interest's sake,
313 it says America Mitigating and Achieving Zero Emissions
314 Originating from Nature. How is that for a tongue twister? But
315 AMAZON itself is pretty easy to remember.

316 AMAZON21 would help fulfill America's commitment to that
317 global pledge -- not just America, but these hundred other nations
318 -- commitment to that global pledge by establishing a trust fund
319 which will enable the State Department to forge agreements with
320 developing nations that will protect and restore their carbon
321 sinks.

322 In the past, the United States has been limited in its ability
323 to enter into these bilateral agreements because of the short-term
324 nature of funding through the annual appropriations process.
325 Solving that longstanding issue, however, requires making
326 long-lasting commitments.

327 The trust fund created under my legislation -- and "my
328 legislation," so many hundreds of people have worked on this
329 legislation; I just happen to have my name at the front of it;
330 I am proud of that, but I am so proud of the work they have done
331 -- would authorize the financing of conservation or restoration
332 of nature-based climate projects abroad that protect carbon sinks
333 far into the future.

334 Similarly, AMAZON21 emphasizes transparency and

335 results-based funding model to ensure our partners make good on
336 their promise to halt deforestation. We are not going to pay
337 money without making sure that, in fact, we are getting what we
338 are paying for. Nations that enter into agreements with us
339 through this legislation must agree to rigorous external
340 monitoring, reporting, and verification of their progress. We
341 know what satellites can do. You cannot hide from them.

342 Improvements in satellite imagery capabilities have already
343 made it impossible for partners to hide any violation. It is
344 simple. If countries don't meet the terms of this agreement,
345 of the agreement they have, they won't receive funding.

346 In a sense, Mr. Chairman, this is about paying producers
347 for a resource from which we already benefit, as I have said.

348 That resource is the clean air we breathe. These payments are
349 an investment in the continued availability of clean air and
350 sustainable planet for us, for our children, and for generations
351 of Americans to come.

352 Moreover, the trust fund is designed to accept gifts from
353 foundations, individuals, private companies, and other developed
354 nations -- this is a team project; this is not a U.S. project
355 -- to help maximize the impact of America's public investment.

356 It is through these types of private-public partnerships that
357 we can truly begin to tackle the deforestation crisis affecting
358 our planet.

359 AMAZON21 will also help developing nations participate in
360 carbon markets, an important tool to leverage resources from the
361 private sector to fund conservation work -- getting credits.
362 These agreements would allow us to shore up our relationships
363 with developing nations that may otherwise fall under the
364 influence, frankly, of authoritarian regimes seeking to exploit
365 their resources instead of protecting them.

366 It would also create a new technical assistance program in
367 USAID to help them build their capacity to develop nature-based
368 reforestation projects and scale them up, which I think Mr.
369 Westerman's bill certainly would be helped by.

370 Mr. Chairman, helping these nations protect their
371 rainforests serves our national security interest and the
372 attainment of our climate goals, to which both of you referred.
373 Members of this committee know full well the long game that
374 autocratic countries are playing in the developing world with
375 initiatives like China's Belt and Road.

376 We need to think creatively about how the United States can
377 further our national security objectives while also tackling
378 global challenges like deforestation in the process. With
379 AMAZON21, America can firmly reestablish itself as a global leader
380 when it comes to addressing the climate crisis.

381 Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member McCaul, each and every person
382 has a stake in this legislation's success. Whether you live in

383 Bogota, Colombia; Brandywine, Maryland, in my district; Austin,
384 Texas, in your district, we all depend on the clean air that
385 Earth's rainforests and other carbon sinks help to protect.

386 The climate crisis affects us all, and particularly, the
387 most vulnerable and those with the fewest resources, as the
388 committee will hear shortly. Programs like AMAZON21 are the most
389 impactful and cost-effective options, in my view, available to
390 us today to address the climate change.

391 This model has already proven to work by nations like Norway
392 and the United Kingdom, who have similar programs, and others
393 that will set up similar trust funds and authorities. For a sense
394 of scale, if fully funded, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member McCaul,
395 these programs in this bill would eliminate as many as 180 million
396 metric tons of carbon emissions each year -- an amount equal to
397 the total CO2 produced by cars in the United States over a two-year
398 period.

399 That is why I was proud to introduce AMAZON21 in the House
400 last November and why I am glad to have this opportunity to speak
401 about it with the committee today.

402 And I want to thank Mr. Westerman. I don't know Mr.
403 Westerman very well. We are a big body and we have not worked
404 on things together. But I am so enthusiastic and appreciative
405 of his participation with his bill, this bill, and other efforts
406 that will join together. Mr. Chabot mentioned the legislation

407 that he has. If we join these together, we are going to make
408 a real impact for generations yet to come.

409 I want to thank Mr. Sanjayan of the Conservation
410 International for working closely with me on this bill over the
411 past few years. You are going to hear from him in a little bit.

412 I also want to thank Hindou Ibrahim for sharing her insights
413 with the committee today and the perspective of indigenous peoples
414 and others most vulnerable to the climate crisis.

415 I also want to thank Chairman Meeks again for holding today's
416 hearing and for cosponsoring this legislation with me, as well
417 as Chairman Keating for shepherding AMAZON21 through the Europe,
418 Eurasia, Energy, and Environment Subcommittee.

419 I also want to thank all of you who are in attendance at
420 the hearing today.

421 I think this will have a major impact, Mr. Chairman. You
422 and I have talked about this. I very much appreciate, as I said,
423 your opening statement, which heightens the responsibility that
424 we have. And I want to thank you for being tolerant with your
425 time as well.

426 Thank you.

427 [The statement of Mr. Hoyer follows:]

428

429 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

430 Chairman Meeks. Thank you, Mr. Majority Leader, for your
431 leadership. And as you said, and as the ranking member said,
432 this is something that we could all agree and focus on it. That
433 is why, with you, I am happy to have Representative Westerman
434 join us.

435 And, Mr. Westerman, you are now recognized for your comments.

436 STATEMENT OF HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN

437

438 Mr. Westerman. Thank you, Chairman Meeks, Ranking Member
439 McCaul, and to the members of the committee. It is an honor to
440 be here with Leader Shoyer, or Hoyer, to talk about -- I have
441 kind of combined "Steny" and "Hoyer" at one time to talk about
442 something that we should all be able to agree on.

443 And I am really excited about the topic of this hearing,
444 and I am more excited from the fact that this is the Foreign Affairs
445 Committee addressing this, because I think it is recognition by
446 Congress that carbon in the atmosphere and solving that puzzle
447 is not something we can solve alone.

448 The atmosphere is a global entity. It doesn't have borders.

449 And we can't solve the carbon emissions into the atmosphere in
450 the United States. It has to be a global effort to solve global
451 carbon.

452 And just to get some facts out on the table -- and I will
453 also tell you, when I was studying forestry at Yale's Graduate
454 School, if I had known I was going to one day be the only forester
455 in Congress, I might have taken more classes and studied a little
456 harder.

457 [Laughter.]

458 But this is a topic that I am passionate about, and it is
459 a topic we should all be passionate about. Because before the

460 Industrial Revolution, there were 280 parts per million of carbon
461 in the atmosphere. Today, there is 419 parts per million of
462 carbon in the atmosphere. Without some carbon in the atmosphere
463 to create a little bit of a greenhouse effect, we would freeze
464 to death. Too much carbon in the atmosphere, we generate too
465 much heat. So, there is a delicate balance there.

466 We talked about the Trillion Trees Act. We talked about
467 how Teddy Roosevelt said trees or forests are the lungs of the
468 Earth. They breathe in carbon dioxide and they breathe out
469 oxygen.

470 If we think about that in a little more detail, trees are
471 by far the largest scale, they are the most pragmatic, proactive
472 solution that we have to atmosphere carbon. You hear all this
473 talk about carbon capture and sequestration. Trees have been
474 doing that since there has been trees on the planet. They pull
475 the carbon dioxide out of the air. The photosynthesis in the
476 internal parts of the leaf, they take that carbon and they make
477 hydrocarbon tanks that are stored in the wood, and they give H₂O
478 and oxygen back out into the atmosphere. We know that science.

479 But trees also offer a phenomenal benefit, in that wood is
480 the ultimate carbon battery. And we talk about battery
481 technologies. If you want to talk about something that stores
482 carbon, it is wood. The wood in this table at one time was
483 atmosphere carbon. Fifty percent of this wood by weight is

484 carbon. And as long as this table is here, that carbon will be
485 sequestered.

486 That is why we have to look at the big picture here. We
487 have to look at not only how we keep forests healthy and vibrant,
488 but how do we use them -- and that is what real conservation is
489 -- how do we use them to make a difference?

490 I want to tell you the story of Arkansas, and this is a story
491 that is really across the South. Last year, the State of Arkansas
492 grew 44 million tons of wood. The State also harvested 24 million
493 tons of trees. Those trees got converted into wood. They are
494 going into homes and they are storing carbon.

495 There is 20 million more tons of wood in the State of Arkansas
496 today than there was this time last year because the forests were
497 managed healthier. And we can use our trees. We can grow them
498 faster and grow more. We can protect special areas, and we can
499 create building products that are very sustainable.

500 That is why a company called Walmart in my home State is
501 building their new corporate headquarters out of mass timber.
502 Their new corporate headquarter building will contain 17 million
503 pounds of carbon when it is completed. It will be built with
504 trees that were sustainably grown in reforested areas in Arkansas,
505 creating local jobs and economic growth.

506 That is the great story we have about forestry and trees,
507 is that we can have a healthy environment and we can have a vibrant

508 economy all at the same time. The impetus behind the Trillion
509 Trees Act was a study that said that, if we planted a trillion
510 trees across the planet, we could capture two-thirds of the carbon
511 emitted by man since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.
512 That is 205 gigatons of carbon that a trillion trees would
513 sequester.

514 And for any other tree nerds out there, we have about 3
515 trillion trees on the planet today. Scientists estimate that
516 at one time there were 7 trillion trees. So, we have got a lot
517 of headroom as far as we could go in creating more forests.

518 Another fact that people don't realize is that, since 1850,
519 we have emitted over 200 gigatons of carbon through deforestation
520 by forest fires. And we are not immune from that here in the
521 United States. Last year, we burned 7 million acres of forests.
522 The year before, it was 10 million acres -- putting millions
523 of tons of carbon into the atmosphere that was sequestered in
524 the trees.

525 And there is another side of that story. When you burn a
526 tree, you are releasing carbon dioxide. When you char the tree
527 and leave it on the ground and the bugs eat it, you are releasing
528 methane, CH₄, which is a worst greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

529 There is nothing we can do to help air, water, and wildlife
530 habitat more than having healthy forests.

531 And, Leader Hoyer, I would love to work with you on this.

532 And I thank you would find, though, a willing group in the
533 Republican Party who could work on real forest reform on bills
534 like the Trillion Trees Act.

535 The bottom line is we have to take care of the forests we
536 have, and there is hope. And I can tell you an example of that.

537 A lot of people don't realize that, last year, in the last
538 two years, we lost 20 percent of the most iconic trees on the
539 planet -- the giant sequoias that grow only in a few groves in
540 California. Forest fires destroyed 20 percent, 19 percent of
541 those trees in two years. These are some of the most
542 fire-resilient species on the planet.

543 So, you had the intersection of two bad things. You had
544 mismanagement of the forest and a warming, drying climate that
545 intersected, and it is the perfect storm to destroy a tree that
546 should never be destroyed by fire. These trees are over 3,000
547 years old. Up until the 21st century, those groves in California
548 averaged 31 fires per century. We created the Forest Service
549 and started putting them out. In the last century, they averaged
550 three fires. Now, Nature is correcting that.

551 And I was out there last week, a bipartisan trip. We are
552 going to have a bipartisan bill on saving the sequoias. Whole
553 groves of sequoia trees, nothing but charred remains on the side
554 of the hill -- that should never happen. We should be ashamed
555 that we let this happen.

556 We can't be exporting bad forest management policies to the
557 rest of the world. We know how to do it right. We need to work
558 together to get our house in order here and to export that
559 technology and that help to other parts of the world. Because,
560 as you mentioned, there is no place like the Amazon that has as
561 many trees and as much opportunity to sequester and store carbon
562 and give us clean oxygen to breathe.

563 But we can't have a policy that says don't ever touch the
564 forest, because that is a management policy, or put the fires
565 out. That is what we did in the United States, and we are paying
566 a terrible price for that right now.

567 So, I would really embrace the opportunity to work together;
568 to follow the scientific research that we have; to work on policy
569 that actually does good things; that is going to, at the end of
570 the day, mean there are more trees growing on the planet, more
571 carbon being sequestered, and more oxygen being released.

572 One last fact. Transportation worldwide makes up about a
573 quarter of greenhouse gas emissions. Buildings make up close
574 to half of it. We have been focusing way too much on
575 transportation, when we could focus on sustainable buildings,
576 which wood could play a very important part of that, if we truly
577 wanted to address the global carbon issue.

578 Again, I have a friend that said that, when it comes to the
579 environment, trees are the answer; now what is your question?

580 And we need to follow that because the science backs that up.

581 Again, thank you for having the hearing. Thank you for --

582 I kind of took advantage of the Leader using more time and used

583 a little bit more myself. So, thank you, Leader Hoyer.

584 Chairman Meeks. It is called "the magic minute."

585 [Laughter.]

586 Mr. Westerman. Yes. Very much so.

587 [The statement of Mr. Westerman follows:]

588

589 ***** COMMITTEE INSERT *****

590 Chairman Meeks. I want to thank both of you for your very
591 passionate and eloquent testimony. And it really is an absolute
592 honor and a privilege to have both of you here at our committee.
593 Again, thank you for taking the time.

594 And I will now excuse you, gentlemen.

595 We will now turn to panel two.

596 And as Mr. Chabot had said earlier, many of us will have
597 to leave to go to the Conference Committee, and I believe Mr.
598 Connolly will take over.

599 I think, Mr. Connolly, I will give you the honor of
600 introducing our guests.

601 Mr. Connolly. Sorry for that delay. We had some niceties
602 of exchange here.

603 So our second panel we have two witnesses, Dr. Sanjayan --
604 am I pronouncing that, Dr. Sanjayan, correctly? All right.

605 Dr. Sanjayan is a conservation scientist and CEO of
606 Conservation International, a global nonprofit dedicated to
607 securing the critical benefits that nature provides to humanity.
608 He co-led the launch of Conservation International's
609 award-winning "Nature is Speaking" brand campaign, and he oversaw
610 a successful \$1.1 billion capital-raising operation.

611 His scientific work has been published in peer-reviewed
612 journals Science, Nature, and Conservation Biology. He's hosted
613 and co-hosted a range of documentaries for outlets including PBS,

614 BBC, and Discovery Channel.

615 Ms. Hindou Ibrahim is an environmental activist and a member
616 of Chad's -- no. She's online. Sorry. And a -- pastoralist
617 M'Bororo people. She began advocating for indigenous rights and
618 environmental protection at age 16 and founded the Association
619 for the Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad -- AFPAT.

620 She also serves as the U.N. Sustainable Development Goal
621 advocate. She's vice chair of the Global Forest Coalition,
622 Conservation International board member and Earthshot Prize
623 council member.

624 Ms. Romina Bandura is an economic and senior fellow with
625 the Project of Prosperity and Development and the Project on U.S.
626 Leadership at the -- in development at the Center for Strategic
627 and International Studies.

628 Her current research focuses on the future of work in
629 developing countries and the United States economic engagement
630 in the developing world. She previously worked as a senior
631 consultant at the Economist Intelligence Unit and an economist
632 at the International Labor Organization.

633 Without objection, all the witnesses' prepared -- full
634 prepared testimony will be part of the full record and I'll now
635 recognize the witnesses for a five-minute summary of their
636 testimony, beginning with you, Dr. Sanjayan.
637 Welcome.

638 STATEMENTS OF M. SANJAYAN, PH.D., CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
639 CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL; HINDOU OUMAROU IBRAHIM, PRESIDENT,
640 ASSOCIATION FOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND PEOPLES OF CHAD (AFPAT);
641 ROMINA BANDURA, SENIOR FELLOW, PROJECT ON PROSPERITY AND
642 DEVELOPMENT, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
643

644 STATEMENT OF M. SANJAYAN

645 Mr. Sanjayan. Good morning Chairman, Ranking Member,
646 members the committee, Representative Connolly.

647 My name is Dr. M. Sanjayan. I'm the CEO of Conservation
648 International, a nonprofit supporting conservation in over 50
649 countries. My vice chairman, Mr. Harrison Ford, and board
650 member, Mr. Idris Elba, regret not being here today to support
651 this testimony because of work.

652 Thank you for inviting me to share my perspective on the
653 forest conservation and fight against climate change, and how
654 AMAZON21 can transform our efforts.

655 Conservation International's mission is to protect nature
656 that is most important to people, and everything we do is aimed
657 at ensuring that people and nature thrive together. Since 1987,
658 we have brought together businesses, governments, and communities
659 to protect and restore nature, and everywhere we work our model
660 helps communities create self-sustaining conservation-based
661 economies.

662 The AMAZON21 Act would substantially strengthen these
663 efforts. At its core, this legislation incentivizes developing
664 nations to protect and restore nature.

665 It rewards action that maintains the health of some of our
666 most critical, most iconic ecosystems, while unlocking financial
667 opportunities for local communities and landowners that commit
668 to conservation.

669 This bill is good for wildlife. It's good for ecosystems.
670 It's good for the climate. But it's also in equal measure good
671 for local communities and indigenous peoples, good for economies
672 and security, not only food security and climate security but
673 also national security.

674 In short, it's good for us. The science on this is clear.
675 Nature is the building block required for a stable future for
676 all of humanity. And, yet, nature is under assault virtually
677 everywhere with little to no investment to reverse or halt this
678 trend.

679 Today, only 3 percent of all available global climate finance
680 is dedicated to protecting nature. There is a massive gap between
681 what we need and what we have, and yet the demand for private
682 sector nature-based investments and opportunities is sky high.

683

684 It's, clearly, there. Right now, there are literally
685 billions of dollars in private capital for nature-based

686 investments sidelined by uncertainty and sidelined by risk.

687 In just the last two or three years, for example, we have
688 seen private sector interest in carbon markets soaring and it
689 could easily exceed \$50 billion before the end of this decade.

690

691 Through carbon markets, companies and individuals can invest
692 in the protection of nature, thus shortening the time line to
693 achieve our climate goals. By enabling private-public
694 partnerships, this bill would allow new investments to reach
695 places where policy and markets do not.

696 We're not tilling new soil here. In 1984, Congress
697 established the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to work
698 with both the public and private sectors to protect nature, and
699 since then, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has become
700 the largest private conservation grant maker in the United States.

701

702 The AMAZON21 Act brings this concept of public-private
703 partnerships to a global stage. More than half the world's GDP
704 already depends, in some ways, on the benefits provided by nature.

705

706 The loss of these benefits would be catastrophic and would
707 amount to a loss of \$2.7 trillion dollars. As always, the poorest
708 countries, the neediest rural communities, would be the hardest
709 hit, accelerating resource depletion, famines, climate-fueled

710 migration -- a recipe as, we all know, for global instability.

711 AMAZON21 would dramatically and cost effectively stave off
712 these effects. In the places where I have spent my formative
713 years -- South Asia, West and East Africa, California, and Montana
714 -- I have seen firsthand how climate change has made life harder
715 for everyone and virtually impossible for some.

716 This legislation would help secure the nature that people
717 need to survive and it would maintain our country's global
718 leadership and rich conservation legacy. In the United States,
719 our most beloved landscapes and iconic wildlife remain today
720 because of our long history of bipartisan conservation.

721 The entire team and board of directors at Conservation
722 International thank Majority Leader Hoyer for his leadership in
723 crafting AMAZON21, and this committee and all of you for holding
724 this important hearing.

725 Thank you.

726 [The statement of Mr. Sanjayan follows:]

727

728 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

729 Mr. Connolly. Thank you. You had five seconds to go.
730 Thank you very much.

731 Before I call on Ms. Ibrahim, I do want to acknowledge from
732 the chair our distinguished majority leader and his leadership
733 on this issue, and, Mr. Hoyer, thank you so much for being here
734 and for showing us the way.

735 Steny Hoyer has always been a leader in this area and has
736 been an inspiration and a model for so many of us here in Congress.
737 So thank you. Your leadership is going to make a big difference.

738

739 Ms. Ibrahim, you are now recognized for your five minutes
740 of testimony. Welcome.

741 STATEMENT OF HINDOU OUMAROU IBRAHIM

742

743 Ms. Ibrahim. Thank you, Chair. My name is Hindou Oumarou
744 Ibrahim. I am the president of the Association for Indigenous
745 Women and Peoples of Chad.

746 I want to thank Chairman Meeks, Ranking Member McCaul and
747 the members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee for the
748 opportunity to discuss the importance of the U.S. leadership in
749 nature conservation and investing in natural climate solutions.

750

751 I am pleased to share my perspective as an indigenous person
752 on these critical needs for investments in conservation
753 worldwide, including through the AMAZON21 Act, thanks to
754 Congressman Hoyer for his leadership on climate and his advocacy
755 for indigenous peoples.

756 I am joining you today from Abidjan, where I am speaking
757 at a convention to combat decertification, a crisis exacerbated
758 by climate change and contributing to the mass extinction of
759 biodiversity as well as trapping the whole continent in poverty.

760

761 I speak to you today as a conservationist and as a community
762 leader who implement a concrete project and help my community.

763 I was born in a M'Bororo pastoralist community. For centuries
764 we have been practicing the seasonal herding of livestock to fresh

765 grazing ground in the Sahel region, following the rhythm of the
766 season.

767 We protect our environment because our survival depends on
768 it. Living in harmony with nature is a common principle shared
769 by all indigenous communities in Africa, in the Amazon, in the
770 Arctic, the Pacific Islands and everywhere.

771 Although today we represent 5 percent of the global
772 population, indigenous peoples effectively manage more than a
773 quarter of the land and we help to protect 80 percent of the planet
774 biodiversity and help the Earth's ecosystem, which are vital to
775 the Earth's ability to absorb and store CO2.

776 Tropical forests in the Congo, Amazon Basin serve as the
777 lungs of our planet, yet, are under increasing climate pressure
778 from extreme deforestation caused by the agro industry.

779 This week, a diverse group of Amazon Brazilians' indigenous
780 organizations signed a letter urging Congress to support
781 AMAZON21, ensuring transparency and strength for financing in
782 partnership with indigenous peoples.

783 Land where indigenous peoples have forests rights, including
784 government protection of those rights, have better conservation
785 practices and lower incidence of deforestation and carbon
786 emission than surrounding areas.

787 Today, we all are facing the consequences of the climate
788 change in America and everywhere on the corner of the world.

789 We need you as leadership to partner with indigenous peoples and
790 local communities to stop illegal logging, mining, poaching, and
791 trafficking driven by criminal networks. Investing in nature
792 as a solution can help countries tackling multiple challenges
793 like food and water security, human health, and climate change.
794

795 In closing, Mr. President, indigenous peoples can help to
796 design these solutions through our traditional knowledge to help
797 fighting drought and climate change. To implement this
798 investment in nature, we need economic and technical support in
799 recognition of our rights.

800 Policy like AMAZON21 are crucial for enabling developing
801 countries and indigenous communities to sustain ecosystem, secure
802 livelihoods, and mitigate climate change.

803 There is no pathway to a safe climate which does not involve
804 a natural climate solution. Investment like those called for
805 in AMAZON21 are essential for sustainable futures.

806 I would like to thank Patrick Riley from U.S. delegation
807 at the convention in the embassy of U.S. in Abidjan for kindly
808 hosting me today, and the Chairman Meeks and your team, I guess,
809 that you already visited here, and the staff at the embassy is
810 sending you really great regards.

811 Thank you so much again, Chair, for the opportunity.

812 [The statement of Ms. Ibrahim follows:]

813

814 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

815 Mr. Connolly. Thank you so much. And, again, great timing.

816

817 Ms. Bandura, you're now recognized for your five minutes
818 of testimony. Welcome.

819 STATEMENT OF ROMINA BANDURA

820

821 Ms. Bandura. Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Meeks and
822 Ranking Member McCaul, Representative Connolly, and members of
823 the committee. It's really an honor to be here today and I welcome
824 this important hearing.

825 I'm a development professional. I'm not a conservational
826 scientist or a climate scientist. So my remarks today will focus
827 on the economic security and governance drivers of deforestation,
828 particularly with regards to the Amazon, the largest rainforest
829 in the world.

830 At CSIS, we did a report on this with country case studies.
831 So I'll give you some copies later. But just to provide a little
832 bit of context of the magnitude of the challenge.

833 The Amazon is about the size of the continental United
834 States. It spans eight countries and has a population of about
835 35 million people.

836 The first point I want to make is that deforestation in the
837 Amazon is a complex issue that is linked to structural challenges
838 in these countries. It is not solely an environmental problem.
839

840 Deforestation is a symptom of economic and governance
841 vulnerabilities, including high levels of poverty, lack of
842 economic opportunities. There's overall weak presence -- state

843 presence. Property rights are not well defined. There's land
844 tenure issues, weak enforcement of laws. There are great laws
845 in the books. Unfortunately, you know, state capacity is not
846 there. And also inadequate infrastructure planning.

847 We need to include these issues at the table. Otherwise,
848 we'll, literally, not be seeing the forest for the trees.

849 The second point I want to raise is that national and
850 subnational governments of the Amazon are primarily responsible
851 for preserving the environment and achieving sustainable
852 development.

853 These are middle income countries, sovereign nations, and
854 own the rainforest. So the United States and the international
855 community need to be mindful on how they engage in the region.
856

857 My third point is that the United States can and should play
858 a constructive role in the Amazon Basin in partnership with
859 governance -- governments, local stakeholders, and other donors,
860 supporting not only environmental preservation but good
861 governance, economic growth, and security.

862 What are some ways to support the Amazon countries? First,
863 the United States government needs to take a more holistic
864 approach in its programming on deforestation, linking assistance
865 on environmental issues to governance, economic development, and
866 security issues.

867 This requires coordination among our U.S. bilateral agencies
868 and programs focused on improving the capacity of local
869 governments.

870 Second, when implementing the AMAZON21 bill or any U.S.
871 programs, there should be buy-in from national and subnational
872 governments. Sometimes these different levels of governments
873 do not talk to each other, and national plans and policies can
874 become disconnected or at odds with some national plans, which
875 leads to poor project choices and wasted resources.

876 There has to be agreement and coordination among the
877 different levels of government, especially with new actors
878 investing in the region, for example, China, and private
879 investors.

880 These governance and coordination issues are important and
881 should figure in our programming. Otherwise, what the United
882 States will provide with one hand others will take with the other.
883

884 Third, we need to work with other donors and actors in the
885 region so that there is less fragmentation among programs and
886 there's greater impact in conserving forests.

887 As an example, Norway has, and I think it was mentioned
888 before, has set up an Amazon fund already. There are many NGOs
889 and indigenous communities on the ground with ample knowledge
890 on forest conservation and we also need to tap into private

891 companies to create sustainable economic opportunities.

892 And fourth, the United States can continue providing
893 training and technological solutions to better survey the forest
894 and professionalize the law enforcement agencies on the ground.

895

896 Advanced technology can be used to supply -- for supply trace
897 -- supply chain traceability and can improve local governments'
898 ability to enforce laws and address deforestation.

899 Finally, I brought an example of what, you know, United
900 States can do. This is acai, which is a super berry that is grown
901 in the Amazon.

902 It can be grown very sustainably and it's OPIC, now DFC funded
903 an American entrepreneur for a processing plant and this is sold
904 -- you can go to Giant or if you want the supersized volume you
905 can go to Costco and they are selling acai there.

906 So this is just one example of, you know, sustainable
907 development.

908 So, to conclude, we are currently at a crossroads in
909 responding to deforestation in the Amazon and this requires a
910 multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approach.

911 I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today.

912 Thank you for your time.

913 [The statement of Ms. Bandura follows:]

914

915

*****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

916 Mr. Connolly. Thank you, Ms. Bandura, and thank you for
917 bringing the product. That makes everything even more real.
918 Thank you.

919 We're not going to go into questioning by members and the
920 chair is happy to recognize his friend and the great chair of
921 the Subcommittee on Europe, Energy, the Environment and Cyber,
922 the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Keating.

923 Mr. Keating?

924 Mr. Keating. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And as someone that
925 was at COP26 myself, I do recognize the urgency. You know, this
926 is -- we're not dealing with this in a current sense.

927 We should have been dealing with this decades and decades
928 ago, and I do realize the importance of involving the indigenous
929 community in the decision-making, not just informationally but
930 in the decision-making that is going forward.

931 But I want to touch, briefly, because I think there's a moment
932 of urgencies that is going to be underscored very shortly. Leader
933 Hoyer mentioned the security issues that are attendant to
934 deforestation, and deforestation poses grave global and domestic
935 security risks as well.

936 The U.S. military and intelligence officials have repeatedly
937 warned that deforestation and climate change lead to food and
938 water shortages, ecological degradation, extreme weather
939 patterns, conditions that enable mass population displacement,

940 terrorist activity and other forms of violence and conflicts
941 between nations. Terrorist groups such as Boko Haram,
942 al-Shabaab, and ISIS are known to exploit food insecurity to
943 further their ambitions.

944 And we're now in another crisis because of what I mentioned
945 briefly before, the war in Ukraine. This fall, the world will
946 see, I think, the devastating impacts, something that will far
947 eclipse even the tragic casualties we're seeing on the battlefield
948 with the people that are going to be starving in this world,
949 particularly people in North Africa.

950 We will also see certain countries like Ethiopia that have
951 been part of a managed program, agricultural and preservation
952 in these issues, that will be in a better position to survive
953 it.

954 So my point is this, that moving forward with this bill now
955 is not only timely, it's urgent, and I think it's a perfect
956 complement to the idea of managing our environment for our
957 benefit.

958 As we deal with these issues, the U.S. has to be in a
959 leadership role. It's great that the U.K. and Norway and other
960 countries are, but we have found time and time again, on these
961 major issues the U.S. must lead.

962 So this legislation is a terrific opportunity to lead in
963 that front, and I wanted to talk -- ask you the question how working

964 with these other management techniques that is so necessary --
965 I mean, we have seen before as fertilizer is scarce, there'll
966 be more agricultural initiatives, where they're deforesting
967 areas, using that ash to fertilize, which is only good for a year
968 or two. Then they move forward and deforest a whole other area.
969

970 So we have to manage these things. This piece of
971 legislation, AMAZON21, going forward, would complement so many
972 other initiatives around the world.

973 So could you comment on the potential for this moving forward
974 to really complement and to push forward so many other management
975 techniques that we need to go with this for other countries.

976 And as you mentioned, something else I saw at COP26 enormous
977 potential of private investment that exists. So I really think
978 this is critical legislation that couldn't come at a more
979 important time.

980 So if you could comment on how this would increase that kind
981 of partnership and among countries and on the private side as
982 well?

983 Mr. Sanjayan. Thank you, Representative Keating.

984 I think you're completely right. The world is really
985 looking for American leadership on this issue. Part of that is
986 because American companies are looking for a signal -- a signal
987 around security to invest in nature.

988 The one thing I know for sure is the nature tomorrow will
989 be more valuable than it is today and that is an absolute truism,
990 and the signals that we give here with AMAZON21 will enable
991 companies to invest in nature and invest in carbon with more
992 certainty in these countries that are rich in carbon and poor
993 in other resources.

994 I can also tell you that you're absolutely right that --
995 you know, in all my life -- I mean, my father worked in the timber
996 industry at the very sort of -- when I was a child in West Africa.

997 I've never seen a country that has deforested itself emerge as
998 a stable successful democracy in any easy way.

999 So what we are setting up here is a foundational building
1000 block that will have ripple effects into the economies of these
1001 countries, into preventing loss of water, loss of habitat,
1002 livelihoods.

1003 Deforestation is difficult. People do it when they're
1004 really forced to do it, and all we're trying to do with this act
1005 is give them that incentive and opportunity to protect and restore
1006 forests at scale like they're doing in Kenya, like they're doing
1007 in Ethiopia, like they're doing in Colombia and there's several
1008 countries -- Costa Rica is great, another great example -- and
1009 thus help that move towards a more sustainable economy and a more
1010 stable democracy.

1011 Mr. Connolly. Thank you, Mr. Sanjayan, and the gentleman's

1012 time has expired. But I do want to give an opportunity, Mr.
1013 Keating, for the other two witnesses to respond, if you desire.

1014 Ms. Bandura?

1015 Ms. Bandura. Yes, I agree and the issue of food security
1016 is going --

1017 Mr. Connolly. if you could just bring that closer to you.

1018

1019 Ms. Bandura. Sorry.

1020 Mr. Connolly. Thank you.

1021 Ms. Bandura. The issue of food security is also an important
1022 aspect in the Amazon because if we continue at this pace, you
1023 know, the water -- the rainfall patterns will change and will
1024 affect, you know, agriculture, not only in that region but in
1025 South America and other parts of the world.

1026 So it's an important issue. In terms of insecurity, in the
1027 Amazon, there are also powerful groups -- illegal groups -- that
1028 affects the security of people on the ground and the indigenous
1029 communities as well.

1030 So my point on security is that also we need presence of,
1031 you know, law enforcement and we need good governance because
1032 many of the subnational levels of government don't have the
1033 capability to really, you know, monitor and enforce the law.
1034 So they also need our help. So that's all I'm going to say.

1035 Mr. Connolly. Thank you.

1036 Ms. Ibrahim, any comments?

1037 Ms. Ibrahim. Yes, thank you very much for the questions.

1038 That's completely right. What is happening in my region
1039 in Sahel and also in all the subregions of the Congo Basin
1040 communities are fighting just to get access to the natural
1041 resources, and that creates a big conflict between them where
1042 they kill each other.

1043 And it is also the harm of all the terrorist groups who take
1044 opportunities because people has become more poor and then they
1045 come over the land and we really live in this area. So having
1046 these financed can help the community to settle.

1047 It's taught them to move from one community to another one
1048 like being internal migrant or international migrant because it
1049 can help them to create a life and livelihood and restore the
1050 environment.

1051 And investment -- of course, having the private sector is
1052 very important. But we need the leadership of a country like
1053 U.S. We need public funding who can come to the communities and
1054 who can give talks to the young peoples.

1055 You know, in my communities we live that every day. We know
1056 that the younger generation are always going to look for their
1057 futures outside and they do not have any other choice because
1058 they didn't went to school -- to go to the offices. They just
1059 depend from the rainfall and when there is no forest -- forest

1060 products, there is not enough rain to do the agriculture. Either
1061 they have to migrate or they have to join the terrorist groups.
1062 These kinds of initiatives can help them to

1063 Mr. Connolly. The chair now recognizes the gentleman from
1064 Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, for his five minutes of questioning.
1065 Welcome.

1066 Mr. Perry. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and
1067 I'm going to probably spend most of my time on a statement here
1068 more than a question and some probably unwelcome and unpleasant
1069 realities.

1070 We're probably going to hear over and over again today about
1071 the threat of deforestation and I think it's real how it's critical
1072 to the environment to protect the forest and I agree with that.
1073

1074 But, apparently, the Washington elite news or, correction,
1075 elites' answer appears to be throwing billions of U.S. taxpayer
1076 dollars into the wind in corrupt foreign places in an effort to
1077 make themselves feel better. I don't know if we're going to do
1078 anything that's better.

1079 Unfortunately, time after time, anti-fossil fuel activist
1080 types use the weight of the government to pick winners and losers
1081 without any consideration or little consideration of the
1082 unintended and unwanted consequences of their actions.

1083 The American people are told by the global elites that they

1084 must stop using fossil fuels or significantly curb their
1085 consumption.

1086 Yet, the environmentalists conveniently leave out the
1087 ecological devastation that will result from the pursuit of the
1088 so-called clean energy alternatives. Just because it's not
1089 happening in your town or maybe in your country doesn't mean it's
1090 not happening somewhere and that you're supporting it.

1091 For example, the Congo Basin is home to the second largest
1092 rainforest in the world and 60 percent of this forest lies in
1093 the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

1094 The DRC is also the world's leading source of mined cobalt,
1095 which is a critical mineral necessary for lithium ion batteries
1096 used in EVs, or electric vehicles, and battery storage projects,
1097 supplying approximately 70 percent -- 70 percent of the world's
1098 mined cobalt all coming from one place.

1099 As a result, the Chinese, with the assistance of the
1100 president's son, Hunter, are employing child labor to strip the
1101 country of its cobalt reserves with little -- probably no concern
1102 about the safety of the children since they do the mining, the
1103 environmental impacts of the process, or what trees or forests
1104 need to be mowed down to effectively mine the area and move the
1105 product to the green end user in the West.

1106 It's not very green there. It's not green in the DRC. It's
1107 no coincidence that in 2017 the DRC saw more forest loss than

1108 any other country outside of Brazil. I don't see anybody crying
1109 for a reduction in the mining in the Congo for this at the same
1110 time.

1111 And this driver of rapid deforestation is only going to grow
1112 in intensity as the misguided push away from fossil fuels before
1113 its time should be continues.

1114 According to the International Agency -- correction, Energy
1115 Agency's report on the role of critical minerals in clean energy
1116 transitions -- and so this is the International Energy Agency.
1117

1118 This isn't Congressman Perry telling you this. By 2040,
1119 cobalt demand could be anything from six to 30 times higher than
1120 today's level -- we already talked about how much comes from the
1121 DRC -- while this massive increase in the extraction of cobalt
1122 to feed the net-zero lie threatens the rainforest in the Congo
1123 Basin while enriching the Chinese and the First Family.

1124 It is by no means the only massive spike in extractive
1125 activities expected as a result of this misguided net-zero push.

1126 Again, quoting the EIA -- correction, IEA's report on the role
1127 of critical minerals, solarvoltaic plants, PV plants, wind farms,
1128 and electric vehicles generally require more minerals to build
1129 than their fossil-fuel based counterparts.

1130 A typical electric car requires six times the mineral inputs
1131 of a conventional car and an onshore wind plant requires nine

1132 times more mineral resources than a gas-fired plant.

1133 Since 2010, the average amount of minerals needed for a new
1134 unit of power generation capacity has increased by 50 percent
1135 as the share of renewables in new investment has risen. We don't
1136 talk about that at all.

1137 By 2040 -- not that far away -- the IEA expects lithium
1138 demands to increase by 4,200 percent, graphite demand to increase
1139 by 2,500 percent, nickel demand to increase by 1,900 percent,
1140 and as they're called rare earth mineral demand -- they're not
1141 rare, they're critical. They're not rare -- to increase by 700
1142 percent.

1143 All of these minerals have come to -- correction, have come
1144 from somewhere and due to the keep it in the ground mentality
1145 of the Biden administration it'll come from overseas where you
1146 can't see it, where they disregard the environment, and that's
1147 the norm.

1148 This notable destruction of forests, natural habitats, et
1149 cetera, does not include the massive displacement that will come
1150 as a result of land use requirements to site wind and solar farms,
1151 which itself require massive amounts of deforestation.

1152 Added together, it's pretty clear the term clean energy
1153 transition is nothing more than a Soviet style propaganda and
1154 completely untrue but serves the party's aims.

1155 With that, Mr. Chairman, I'd yield.

1156 Mr. Connolly. Thank you. The chair now recognizes the
1157 gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Levin, for his five minutes of
1158 questioning.

1159 Mr. Levin. Thanks so much, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank
1160 Chair Meeks for convening this important hearing on deforestation
1161 and forest conservation, which, I think, proves how seriously
1162 our committee is taking, or most of us are taking, the climate
1163 change threat and the danger it poses to our whole world.

1164 I want to use my first question to position the role of
1165 forests and climate change within a broader debate about how we
1166 engage with the rest of the world.

1167 As the witness testimonies have identified, only by
1168 recognizing that forest conservation is deeply intertwined with
1169 U.S. foreign trade and economic policies can we begin to roll
1170 back the tremendous harm done to this planet by, for example,
1171 the devastation of the Brazilian Amazon and Cerrado and the
1172 Indonesian tropics.

1173 Yet, too often, our collective stated commitment to putting
1174 people and the planet in the center of foreign policy is, in fact,
1175 trumped by other geopolitical or economic interests.

1176 Ms. Ibrahim, can you share your experience that may
1177 illustrate the importance of engaging with local groups, civil
1178 society organizations, and indigenous communities in developing
1179 U.S. climate change policy and how might the laudable goal of

1180 reducing carbon emissions through terrestrial carbon
1181 sequestration be undermined if local populations aren't properly
1182 brought in to such an undertaking?

1183 Ms. Ibrahim. Thank you very much, Congressman Andy Levin.

1184

1185 So involving indigenous communities and local communities
1186 is the best way to protect our remaining forests and to restore
1187 what we lost already. So why I'm saying that? We cannot plant
1188 the trees in the offices and we cannot also have the trees growing
1189 over a night.

1190 So it is a process, and that's why for indigenous peoples,
1191 the local communities, the forest is a way of living. It is the
1192 law that you are giving to these kind of trees.

1193 It is not only like one kind of trees that we have to replant
1194 or protect. It is the ecosystem and this diversity that we wanted
1195 to have, the forest where we can have the insects, the birds,
1196 the animals who can cope and live in harmony with the peoples,
1197 but how we can do work in those communities.

1198 So the U.S. policies need to engage with the indigenous
1199 peoples, local communities, from the design of those policies
1200 because, at the end, we are the ones who are going to implement
1201 it.

1202 So if we design it, we know exactly which kind of land rights
1203 that we want to have in which place, how we can avoid the conflict

1204 over the land and over the access to the natural resources, how
1205 long time we can have profit from these forests that are giving
1206 us food, medicine, and also shelters, and how we can use these
1207 forests to be sustained for the next generations.

1208 So that's why we have our indigenous peoples' traditional
1209 knowledge over centuries who know how to manage and how to use
1210 it.

1211 So we can put those traditional knowledge with the lock that
1212 we have on the science, technology, all together can be combined
1213 to help those policies move forwards.

1214 Mr. Levin. Wonderful.

1215 Ms. Ibrahim. I think so.

1216 Mr. Levin. Thank you.

1217 Ms. Ibrahim. We need to have it across all the regions.
1218 Thank you, sir.

1219 Mr. Levin. Thank you. Yeah, I appreciate that very much.
1220 It's fantastic. I want to ask another question of Dr. Sanjayan.

1221 In your testimony, you make a compelling case for investing
1222 in nature conservation and for the considerable returns that could
1223 be generated in terms of preventing more instability and sources
1224 of conflict in the future.

1225 What are the barriers the private sector is facing in
1226 actually making these investments and what role can Congress play
1227 in unlocking them?

1228 Mr. Sanjayan. Thank you, Congressman. The biggest barrier
1229 that I see right now is the barrier of supply. So we know the
1230 forests are there. We know communities are eager to engage.
1231 But the policies and the financial frameworks are not necessarily
1232 available for them to participate in the market.

1233 This is where USAID and other institutions can significantly
1234 help countries, communities, states, provinces, develop the tools
1235 and technologies from a policy perspective, a science
1236 perspective, and also a financial perspective to actually engage
1237 the market at scale.

1238 I think that is, literally, the number one stumbling block
1239 and that's where U.S. leadership and the signal that it would
1240 create would instantly allow that flow to happen where the private
1241 sector can invest in forest conservation for the benefit of people
1242 and nature and, ultimately, our climate as well.

1243 Mr. Levin. Thank you so much.

1244 Mr. Chairman, my time is about to expire. I have several
1245 more questions but I can keep going. But I'm happy to submit
1246 them and hope the witnesses might answer them in writing if that's
1247 better.

1248 Mr. Connolly. We appreciate that. Thank you so much for
1249 being with us today, Mr. Levin.

1250 Mr. Levin. Thank you.

1251 Mr. Connolly. The chair now recognizes the distinguished

1252 gentlelady from North Carolina, Ms. Manning, for her five minutes
1253 of questioning. Welcome.

1254 Ms. Manning. Thank you, Mr. Connolly, and thank you,
1255 Chairman Meeks, for holding this very important hearing, and I'd
1256 like to thank the witnesses for being here to share your expertise
1257 with us today.

1258 Ms. Bandura, we have seen growing concerns about the risks
1259 of triggering biosphere tipping points across a range of
1260 ecosystems around the world and the potential domino effects.

1261

1262 Could you explain more about this concept and what you see
1263 as being the tipping point for forests like the Amazon
1264 experiencing deforestation and droughts?

1265 Ms. Bandura. Well, there are -- sorry. As I mentioned,
1266 I'm not a climate scientist. But, basically, if we continue,
1267 you know, deforesting at the rate that we are there's going to
1268 be a -- become a point where the -- you know, the rainforest will
1269 not be able to function as a carbon sink and will emit more carbon
1270 into the atmosphere, and this also will change, you know, the
1271 rainfall patterns of the region.

1272 So I am not sure -- you know, I can't really address other
1273 rainforests or, you know, what are the -- maybe Sanjayan can --
1274 he is a conservationist. But this will have also impacts in,
1275 you know, our economic activities. So it's not just about, you

1276 know, environmental activity so but economic impacts.

1277 Ms. Manning. Thank you. Dr. Sanjayan, do you -- would you
1278 like to add something?

1279 Mr. Sanjayan. Sure, very briefly. So it turns out that
1280 the Amazon, like, major rainforests generate their own rainfall
1281 and what that means it's a self-sustaining system, kind of like
1282 a glass bottle and you have a -- like an aquarium, and as you
1283 get beyond a certain tipping point, its ability to regenerate
1284 and create that rainfall is fundamentally altered.

1285 That's something we have only recently learned. And two
1286 scientists, Dr. Tom Lovejoy, who recently passed away and a big
1287 champion for the Amazon, really made the public aware of this
1288 tipping point. And the other is Dr. Johan Rockstrom from the
1289 Potsdam Institute for Climate Science, who really established
1290 these ideas of the planetary tipping point.

1291 Now, if you ask me for a number, I would say it's probably
1292 around 20 to 25 percent. Once we destroy about 20 to 25 percent
1293 of a large rainforest like the Amazon, its ability to regenerate
1294 itself becomes difficult.

1295 If you live in Montana then you know once a forest disappears
1296 and it's a grassland, to put it back into a forest it's very,
1297 very difficult, if not nearly impossible.

1298 Ms. Manning. So I assume that what we're talking about is
1299 if we don't act -- this adds a sense of urgency to our actions

1300 in this regard because if we hit that tipping point we can't fix
1301 the problem that's been solved -- that's been created.

1302 Mr. Sanjayan. That's absolutely right.

1303 Ms. Manning. Thank you. Like my colleagues, I have deep
1304 concerns about climate change, about deforestation, for exactly
1305 the reasons that you have just described here -- about the impact
1306 on climate change, the impact that climate change is having,
1307 rather, on the availability of food production, clean water, in
1308 a variety of countries that can least afford the stresses on their
1309 populations and one result, as we have discussed, is migration
1310 away from those areas that put stresses on other countries.

1311 So I am supportive of the all of the above measures that
1312 we can take to address climate change, including the prevention
1313 of further deforestation, and AMAZON21, certainly, appears to
1314 be an important step, even perhaps a leap, in the right direction
1315 and this is something of huge importance.

1316 But I would like to ask about how we prevent abuse,
1317 misdirection, corruption, by either the governments or the
1318 intended recipients of the funding that could come through
1319 AMAZON21.

1320 And you're shaking your head, Ms. Bandura, so perhaps I'm
1321 in your area and you'd like to comment on this.

1322 Ms. Bandura. Yes, and this is an important issue, and as
1323 I referred at the beginning, you know, this is not only about,

1324 you know, environmental programming but governance and really
1325 fostering capacity for local governments and groups to really
1326 look at how the -- you know, the money and we have to really look
1327 at how the money is being spent.

1328 A lot of the deforestation that is happening, as I mentioned
1329 at the beginning, there are very good laws to preserve areas and
1330 there are indigenous groups that, you know, live in these
1331 preserved areas.

1332 But there are other groups that are coming in and there's
1333 -- you know, there's no good law enforcement mechanism to really
1334 prevent these encroachments.

1335 The other issue is land tenure. There's, you know,
1336 corruption in there as well. So who gets the access -- accessing
1337 the land in the rain forest. And, of course, you know, a lot
1338 of the people that are living in these regions also have not
1339 meaningful economic opportunities and are sometimes exploited
1340 by powerful groups that, obviously, are, you know, flourishing
1341 on corrupt activities and illegal activities.

1342 So I don't think it's only a role for USAID but it's working
1343 also with local law enforcement agencies and, you know, agencies
1344 such as Interpol. Because it's not just about, you know, the
1345 trees. There are a lot of other components happening in the rain
1346 forest, and I'll stop at that.

1347 Mr. Connolly. Thank you.

1348 Ms. Manning. Thank you. My time has expired. I would love
1349 to pursue this further, but I yield back.

1350 Mr. Connolly. Thank you, Ms. Manning.

1351 The chair now recognizes the distinguished representative
1352 from Nevada, Ms. Titus, for her five minutes of questioning.
1353 Welcome.

1354 Ms. Titus. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask Dr.
1355 Sanjayan about the Mekong Delta, changing locations here for a
1356 little bit. The Mekong Delta -- and these are some pretty
1357 impressive statistics -- spans over 200 million acres. That's,
1358 roughly, the size of Texas and Arkansas combined.

1359 It spans China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and
1360 Vietnam, and that the heart of the Delta runs over 3,000 miles
1361 from Tibet to the South China Sea. It accounts for up to 25
1362 percent of fresh water for people in the area and it's second
1363 only to the Amazon in biodiversity, home for about 1,200 unique
1364 freshwater species.

1365 But there's been research at the University of Nevada and
1366 at Utah State on deforestation in Cambodia and how rapidly that
1367 is accelerating. I wonder if you could talk about the impact
1368 of that deforestation on the Mekong and how that's impacting the
1369 whole area.

1370 Did you lose me? I can't see myself. Am I still there?

1371 Mr. Connolly. I think your frozen colleague is asking what

1372 about -- I mean, both Mr. Perry and Ms. Titus have asked us about
1373 other threats in the Mekong Delta in the case of Ms. Titus and
1374 the Democratic Republic of Congo because of the exploitation of
1375 cobalt, among other purposes.

1376 So maybe, Dr. Sanjayan, we might begin with you in terms
1377 of what about the -- start with Mekong Delta but these other major
1378 rainforest areas that provide so much in terms of flora, fauna,
1379 drinking water, and serve as important sinks -- carbon sinks --
1380 for the planet? Shouldn't we be worried about those, too?

1381 Mr. Sanjayan. Absolutely. So it's a great question, and
1382 I just want to point out one thing that the -- this bill has full
1383 transparency built into it in terms of ensuring that the funding
1384 gets to the right people in the right way.

1385 It involves participation of indigenous and local
1386 communities, not just in the full design of projects, and it has
1387 strong transparency requirements.

1388 Now, the Mekong Delta is a place that Conservation
1389 International has worked in for two decades, and I can tell you
1390 that it's extraordinarily carbon rich. It truly is one of these
1391 irreplaceable carbon sinks, if you will.

1392 But the threats to it are many and deforestation is one
1393 threat. The other threat is, of course, water, and the third
1394 one, I would say, would be overfishing. Tonle Sap, for example,
1395 is -- you know, produces more fish than all of the United States

1396 freshwater fisheries combined.

1397 So this bill works on one major part. It, clearly is not
1398 there to deal with every threat out there. However, a major
1399 reason for water instability in the Mekong Delta is because of
1400 deforestation and Cambodia, interestingly, is a country poised
1401 to really open up its carbon markets as a way of protecting
1402 forests.

1403 They need those investments and, you know, we are in the
1404 process of designing projects in Cambodia with very specific
1405 forest conservation targets in mind.

1406 So in terms of a place that's important for carbon. important
1407 for people, but also will benefit from this bill, Cambodia and
1408 the Mekong Delta would, clearly, be so-called in its cross hairs.

1409 Thank you.

1410 Mr. Connolly. I think possibly Ms. Titus might follow up
1411 your last point with yes, but often countries' -- political
1412 leadership in countries, local and otherwise, are faced with,
1413 yes, long term it's in our economic interest to protect this as
1414 a resource but short term I got to get -- you know, my fishing
1415 villages need to make a living.

1416 And so I make short term decisions at long-term costs.
1417 That's the trade off, especially in poorer countries, and that's
1418 a dilemma that faces us all.

1419 And I think, Ms. Bandura, you touched on that. I mean, lots

1420 of factors in the Amazon but part of it is endemic poverty that
1421 drives people to seek a source of revenue that can be sustainable,
1422 from their point of view, even if it's at the cost of the
1423 environment.

1424 Mr. Sanjayan. I mean, the one thing I would mention is that
1425 this bill would allow financial flows to happen very quickly and
1426 that's partly because the private sector is eager for mechanisms
1427 like this in order to participate.

1428 So the lag time between, you know, developing a project and
1429 funding actually flowing in these projects would be, you know,
1430 in my estimation, like, 18 months.

1431 So that is a reasonable time frame. It's not many, many
1432 years later before benefits start flowing. So I think it is a
1433 good mechanism to deal with this issue that you raised, which
1434 is people do need to eat and desperate people are put into
1435 desperate situations where this deforestation becomes their last
1436 means of survival, and we could stop that fast with an act like
1437 this.

1438 Ms. Bandura. Yeah, and that's where also, you know, private
1439 sector innovation and know-how comes into play because, as I
1440 mentioned at the beginning, a lot of the, you know, jobs that
1441 are happening in the -- you know, in the Amazon are either informal
1442 in nature or, you know, with very little pay, little protections,
1443 hazardous.

1444 Think about a mining in Peru -- gold mining in Peru. That
1445 releases mercury in the water, and so we need to really bring
1446 in our -- I mean, and that's where United States has the -- you
1447 know, the biggest and most innovative private sector.

1448 You know, it allowed this to happen and so that's, you know,
1449 one tool that we -- you know, we should leverage to really provide
1450 economic opportunities. We cannot ignore -- we cannot deny
1451 economic opportunities to people. That would not be fair or
1452 truthful, you know, on our end. So --

1453 Mr. Connolly. So let me follow up on that with you, Ms.
1454 Bandura. Let's just put it this way. The current leadership
1455 in the Brazilian government, led by President Bolsonaro, has not
1456 really developed a reputation for being passionate about
1457 protecting the Amazon and, in fact, arguably, even downright
1458 hostile to efforts to protect the Amazon and resentful of
1459 international concern expressed about the need to protect the
1460 Amazon.

1461 Your observations about the current Brazilian government
1462 and how do we kind of change attitudes there so that got a
1463 supportive receptive government that sees it as in its interest
1464 to try to protect this resource and avoid that tipping point we
1465 were talking about?

1466 Ms. Bandura. Yeah, I mean, so --

1467 Mr. Connolly. And if you could bring that closer. Thank

1468 you.

1469 Ms. Bandura. So -- I'm sorry about that.

1470 As I mentioned, you know, these are sovereign nations and
1471 we cannot, you know, really force, you know, leaders to change
1472 their minds.

1473 But we have some tools and there -- I believe, like, Colombia
1474 is a very good example of what can be done in the Amazon, and
1475 if, you know, Colombia would be -- is a partner of the United
1476 States and can also be, you know, leading in the Amazon, there
1477 are initiatives such as the Leticia Pact

1478 That was an initiative that was signed by Bolsonaro. It
1479 needs to be operationalized. And, you know, we have carrots and
1480 sticks. So if we are going to say we're going to implement this
1481 trust fund, provided that, you know, these conditions are met,
1482 that's -- you know, that's both a carrot and a stick.

1483 So it's very -- it's hard to, you know, persuade but, you
1484 know, we have some tools to do that and, you know, we'll see.

1485 But, you know, we can't just force countries to adopt things.

1486 And, you know, pressure from, you know, the civil society
1487 and others, private sector, investors in Brazil and outside can
1488 also be one way, and OECD accession.

1489 Brazil wants to become part of the OECD. So that's also
1490 a tool that, you know, we can use to bring them to more, you know,
1491 sustainable standards.

1492 Mr. Sanjayan. I'd just add, Representative Connolly, that,
1493 you know, Ms. Bandura's report that she has here shows that a
1494 large number of Brazilians really do support strong environmental
1495 posturing. Most Brazilians are pro the Amazon. They want the
1496 Amazon to survive. But there is special interests that win out
1497 and that's what's happening now.

1498 There are two ways to work in Brazil even today. One is
1499 that indigenous peoples in Brazil, in particular, have large
1500 territorial access -- stewardship, guardianship access,
1501 legislative access to land -- and in indigenous lands we have
1502 found great allies in conservation and it's a significant part
1503 of the Amazon.

1504 And the second is that governors, so one level below the
1505 federal system -- governors are very willing within the Brazilian
1506 system to move legislation forward and protect nature within their
1507 own state jurisdictions.

1508 Mr. Connolly. You know, you both implicitly, I think, raise
1509 a question not easily resolved about how far does sovereign
1510 control go over what is a global resource.

1511 So is it my absolute right as a sovereign nation if something
1512 is entirely within my sovereign territory to destroy it, even
1513 if it has planetary consequences, and that's an unanswerable
1514 question at this time.

1515 But looking toward the future, it seems to me that one of

1516 our challenges is going to be to create global structures --
1517 international structures -- that do protect assets that go beyond
1518 my sovereign territory without, you know, compromising or
1519 surrendering sovereign control.

1520 But on the other hand, there are some -- you know, you don't
1521 get to destroy the planet because you decide economically I want
1522 to exploit this unique resource that affects everybody, not just
1523 me, and how do we address that, you know, from an intellectual
1524 point of view.

1525 Do you want to address that, Ms. Bandura?

1526 Ms. Bandura. Well, I don't know if I can solve that issue
1527 but --

1528 Mr. Connolly. I thought you had a solution.

1529 [Laughter.]

1530 Ms. Bandura. It's a complex, you know, challenge. But
1531 yeah, you know, you're right. These are, you know, global commons
1532 but there are other actors involved. So, you know, China was
1533 mentioned as well.

1534 There's a lot of deforestation happening -- illegal
1535 deforestation -- in Russia because of China. So how do we deal
1536 with, you know, that problem. There is also the issue that
1537 Representative Perry mentioned about mining, and so the climate
1538 transition has to take into account our mining resources.

1539 And so I -- we need to also engage the private sector and

1540 the supply chains. That's one way that we could also motivate,
1541 you know, countries not to deforest or change, you know, the way
1542 that they source materials and how we sell the materials.

1543 If the private sector is involved in the supply chain
1544 sourcing that would be also one way.

1545 Mr. Sanjayan. Congressman, you know, if you go to New York
1546 City and go to Central Park and think about how expensive that
1547 real estate must be right there, and you see all these buildings
1548 built up right to the edge of Central Park, imagine someone trying
1549 to grab a bit of Central Park and putting up a skyscraper.

1550 Imagine the hue and cry that you would get in New York and
1551 around the world and, certainly, around this country, and the
1552 reason you'll get that is not because it's not valuable. It's
1553 simply because there is a constituent that will fight for that,
1554 because it is in the enlightened self-interest of every New Yorker
1555 to have Central Park protected.

1556 What AMAZON21 tries to do is to create that enlightened
1557 self-interest among indigenous communities, local communities,
1558 and governments to realize that what they have today is going
1559 to be worth more tomorrow and protecting it is not only in the
1560 interest of the planet but it's an all of -- in their self-interest
1561 as well, and it provides a financial mechanism to incentivize
1562 and sustain it over the long run, particularly through carbon
1563 markets.

1564 Mr. Connolly. I agree, and I think that's been the failure
1565 in the past to, you know, find formulas that create economic
1566 incentives to protect, to proactively cherish and enhance the
1567 resource at hand as opposed to, you know, economic exploitation.

1568 But it's a bit of a -- well, it is a very difficult choice
1569 when you're talking about serious poverty and you can't ask people
1570 to starve to death or forego economic opportunity for some greater
1571 good that they can't see or experience, and so there have to be
1572 economic incentives built in and that's what this legislation
1573 does.

1574 Apparently, my time is up. Seeing and hearing no further
1575 members, I want to thank our panelists so much for an enlightening
1576 and stimulating conversation. We have got a lot of work to do
1577 but we're delighted that we have a piece of legislation we can
1578 act on and we begin somewhere, and this is our somewhere.

1579 So thank you so much for being with us today, and this hearing
1580 is now adjourned.

1581 [Whereupon, at 11:50 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]