



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

## On International Day of Forests, Legislators, Advocates Launch Renewed Push To Pass Deforestation-Free Procurement Act

LIZ KRUEGER March 21, 2022

| ISSUE: [CLIMATE CHANGE](#), [DEFORESTATION](#), [BIODIVERSITY](#), [INDIGENOUS RIGHTS](#)



**Albany** – Today, on [International Day of Forests](#), State Senator Liz Krueger, Assemblyman Kenneth Zebrowski, and a coalition of advocates including Friends of the Earth, NRDC, National Wildlife Federation, Environmental Advocates NY, Sierra Club, and more, launched a renewed push to pass the New York Deforestation-Free Procurement Act ([S.5921/A.6872](#)), and announced the introduction of a companion bill ([S.8596](#)) to create a Supply Chain Transparency Assistance Program within Empire State Development.

"The days are long past when New Yorkers can pretend that what goes on in another part of the world has no impact on us," said **Senator Krueger**. "Whether its climate change or COVID-19, tropical and boreal deforestation - driven by our consumer choices - is creating ecological and social crises on a global scale that we cannot ignore. When you're in a hole, the first thing to do is stop digging. That's why New York State needs to ensure that the products we buy are not contributing to the loss of Earth's most vital ecosystems. At the same time, we can give New York businesses a leg up on the competition by helping them clean up their supply chains. It's a win-win-win for people, planet, and New York's economy."

"Deforestation is a leading contributor to climate change, and the growing impact is a call to action to work to stop these practices," said **Assemblyman Zebrowski**. "In New York, we can take real, meaningful action by ensuring that companies doing business with the State are not procuring any products from land that is subject to deforestation. By creating deforestation-free procurement, New York will be leading by example and ensuring that our tax dollars are not contributing to the degradation of forests across the world. In addition, I will be introducing new legislation, alongside Senator Krueger, that will help businesses improve the transparency of their supply chains while ensuring that they remain competitive."

Tropical forests harbor close to 50 percent of all species on Earth. Those species are now going extinct at a rate that is at least 100 to 1,000 times higher than historical levels, due to human activity. In addition, an estimated 30 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions come from deforestation and forest degradation. Taking into account carbon sequestration potential, stopping the loss of tropical forests, mangroves, and wetlands could provide over 20 percent of necessary climate mitigation by 2030.

Boreal forests represent about 30 percent of the global forest area, help regulate the climate

through the exchange of energy and water, and are a large reservoir of biogenic carbon. Canada's boreal forest alone stores nearly twice as much carbon in its vegetation and soil as the entire world's combined oil reserves.

Globally, an estimated 18,000,000 acres of forest, an area more than half the size of New York State, are lost every year to deforestation according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, with over one-half of Earth's tropical forests already gone. At the current pace, the entirety of Earth's tropical rainforests will be degraded or destroyed within the next 100 years.

Loss of biodiversity resulting from forest degradation and deforestation, as well as human encroachment on formerly undisturbed ecosystems, also increases the risks of zoonotic disease pandemics such as COVID-19.

**The New York Deforestation-Free Procurement Act** would help to ensure that New York State government procurement does not drive tropical or boreal deforestation by tightening an existing state ban on the use of tropical hardwoods for government projects, and creating a new statute requiring state contractors who deal in forest-risk commodities to certify that their products don't drive deforestation.

Many businesses throughout the United States and across the world are already increasingly engaged in efforts to ensure their supply chains are transparent, traceable, ethical, and environmentally sound, whether in reaction to consumer pressure or government regulation, or out of an understanding of corporate social responsibility. Businesses that achieve ethical and sustainable supply chains may also be able to increase their appeal with certain consumers, charge premium prices, or access previously untapped markets as a result

of their efforts.

In order to remain competitive, New York businesses, particularly small and medium-sized businesses and minority- and women-owned businesses, must be able to take advantage of and stay ahead of this socially responsible and beneficial trend. The proposed **Supply Chain Transparency Assistance Program**, administered by Empire State Development, would be available to New York-based small and medium-sized businesses, as well as MWBEs, to help them establish more ethical and sustainable supply chains, while ensuring they have the tools they need to compete in the national and global marketplace.

**Jeff Conant**, Senior International Forests Program Manager at **Friends of the Earth**, said:

"Overconsumption and corporate irresponsibility have driven our global forests and their local and Indigenous defenders to the brink. From the United Nations to corporate boardrooms there is broad consensus that deforestation is an urgent problem requiring visionary action by the world's governments – especially those in overconsuming countries like the U.S. The New York Deforestation-Free Procurement Act is precisely the kind of visionary but achievable approach we need to stem the crisis at the root, and it needs all of our support."

**Jennifer Skene**, Natural Climate Solutions Policy Manager at **NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council)**, said: "Our climate future is tethered to the fate of the world's forests and to the purchasing decisions we make here in the U.S. We can no longer afford to sacrifice our climate-critical forests, from the tropics to the boreal, to destructive, unjust, and unnecessary supply chain practices. New York's bill is a vital step toward a truly global framework for the protection of forests and Indigenous rights and aligning our markets with a just and sustainable future."

**Barbara Bramble**, Vice President, International Wildlife Conservation and Corporate Strategies at **National Wildlife Federation** said: “Deforestation threatens wildlife, people and the climate. But it doesn’t have to be this way: State procurement should avoid deforestation-related products. As consumers, citizens and conservationists, we urge New York legislators to pass these companion bills to require transparent supply chains.”

**Kate Kurera**, Deputy Director of **Environmental Advocates NY**, said: “The New York Deforestation-Free Procurement Act would help prevent both tropical and boreal forests deforestation through the power of state-wide procurement of forest and forest-risk commodities. Using New York’s purchasing power will drive businesses to become more socially responsible. We must protect the world’s diverse ecosystems, sequester more carbon, and protect the lands of indigenous people. We applaud bill sponsors Senator Liz Krueger and Assemblymember Kenneth Zebrowski for their work and look forward to working with them to pass this legislation.

**Tim Keating**, Director of **Rainforest Relief**, said: “Since the late 1980s, purchases of tropical wood by government agencies within New York State have comprised the largest end-use of rainforest-destructive hardwoods in North America. Logging these woods, and the roads bulldozed to get at them, are the largest cause of tropical forest degradation, which is the primary factor leading to deforestation. It’s long past time for New York to close the loopholes in the Tropical Timber Purchasing Act and end purchases of forest-destructive tropical hardwoods.”

**Liz Ahearn**, Conservation Staff, **Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter**, said: “New York must stop contributing to deforestation by halting the purchase of goods that are produced in unsustainable and exploitative supply chains. The New York Deforestation-Free

Procurement Act is necessary to employ sustainable management and purchasing practices, and increase the resilience of human and natural systems to the impacts of climate change."

**Sammy Herdman**, Forests Campaign Associate, **Environment America**, said: "Passing these bills is a no-brainer. Not only will they contribute mightily to stabilizing our climate and safeguarding beloved species from orangutans to caribou, but they will also propel New York into a leadership position when it comes to protecting vital forests worldwide. We must address the climate crisis, prevent biodiversity loss and protect Indigenous rights. This legislation does all that plus provides small and minority- and women-owned businesses competitive assistance in the marketplace. For all this, The New York Deforestation-Free Procurement Act and Supply Chain Transparency Assistance Program must become law."

Supporters of the NY Deforestation-Free Procurement Act include (a partial list):

- Friends of the Earth U.S.
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Environmental Advocates NY
- Environmental Investigation Agency
- Environment America
- Greenpeace USA
- National Wildlife Federation
- New York League of Conservation Voters
- NYPIRG
- NRDC
- Rainforest Action Network
- Rainforest Relief
- Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter
- The Nature Conservancy

- David Suzuki Foundation
- Nature Quebec
- Nature Canada
- Greenpeace Canada
- Domini Impact Investments
- Seventh Generation Interfaith
- As You Sow
- Green Century Capital Management
- Impax Asset Management LLC
- Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility
- Legal and General Investment Management
- Oxfam America
- Trillium Asset Management

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2021-S5921A**

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate

- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Enacts the New York deforestation-free procurement act

March 23, 2021

In Senate Committee [Rules](#)

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Do you support this bill?

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## 2021-S8596

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- Introduced
- ○ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate



- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

- 

Establishes the Supply Chain Transparency Assistance Program

March 21, 2022

In Senate Committee [Rules](#)

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Do you support this bill?