

Lincoln Chafee, Co-Chair
Former United States Senator,
Rhode Island

John Podesta, Co-Chair
President and CEO,
Center for American Progress

Sam Allen
President and CEO, Deere & Co.

D. James Baker
Director, Global Carbon
Measurement Program,
The William J. Clinton Foundation

Nancy Birdsall
President, Center for
Global Development

Sherri Goodman
Former Deputy Under Secretary of
Defense for Environmental Security

Chuck Hagel
Former United States Senator,
Nebraska

Alexis Herman
Former Secretary of Labor

Frank Loy
Former Under Secretary of State
for Global Affairs

Michael Morris
Chairman, President and CEO,
American Electric Power

Thomas Pickering
Former U.S. Ambassador
to the United Nations

Cristián Samper
Director, National Museum
of Natural History

Lynn Scarlett
Former Deputy Secretary
of the Interior

General Gordon Sullivan
Former Chief of Staff,
United States Army

Mark Tercek
President and Chief Executive
Officer, The Nature Conservancy

Nigel Purvis, Executive Director
President, Climate Advisers

A Call for U.S. Leadership to Protect ‘Climate Forests’

The Commission on Climate and Tropical Forests – a bipartisan group of leaders from business, government, advocacy, conservation, global development, science and national security – released its report on October 7, 2009, calling on policymakers to make **halving emissions from tropical deforestation by 2020** a cornerstone of the U.S. climate change response.

The report finds that unchecked **tropical deforestation is a major threat** to vital national interests; forest protections offer **the most cost-effective way to achieve fast, large-scale reductions in CO₂ emissions**; and that U.S.-led efforts to incentivize forest conservation, backed up by strong domestic policies to galvanize international action, would **strengthen national security, reduce international instability, help alleviate global poverty, and conserve priceless biodiversity**.

TROPICAL DEFORESTATION IS AN URGENT PROBLEM. Solving the climate crisis will be nearly impossible without efforts to stem tropical deforestation, which accounts for **17% of global greenhouse gas emissions – more than the entire global transportation sector**.

ADDRESSING TROPICAL DEFORESTATION IS COST-EFFECTIVE. Tropical deforestation is a major emissions source that can be addressed cost-effectively now. To unlock these savings, the United States should invest at least \$1 billion in public funding to combat tropical deforestation prior to 2012, with a total of roughly \$9 billion in private sector investments and \$5 billion in public sector investments deployed annually by 2020. **Along with funding for other international reductions, this would help reduce climate costs faced by U.S. companies by 50%, saving up to \$50 billion by 2020.**

A BIPARTISAN CLIMATE SOLUTION. Like the Commission itself, taking action on tropical deforestation can and should be a **pragmatic, bipartisan undertaking that a problem of this magnitude demands**. Following the report’s recommendations would result in **dramatic near-term reductions in carbon emissions**, while allowing businesses to transition to a clean energy economy, strengthening U.S. national security, helping to alleviate global poverty and protecting vital ecosystems.

U.S. LEADERSHIP IS ESSENTIAL. With Copenhagen approaching rapidly and the need for clear climate leadership at hand, **the United States must lead this global effort** to launch international financial incentives, focus public-private forest conservation investments, and galvanize international action by adopting strong domestic policies.

“Climate change is an extraordinarily pressing challenge that demands strong domestic policies and serious global leadership from the United States. However, to take impactful, near-term action, slowing tropical deforestation must play a central role. The future depends on it.” –Commission Co-Chair and President of the Center for American Progress John Podesta

“By addressing tropical deforestation, U.S. policymakers can cost-effectively address a major emissions source today, giving American business time to transition to a low-carbon economy. Our recommendations can be a recipe for the bipartisan effort a problem of this magnitude requires.” –Former U.S. Senator and Commission Co-Chair Lincoln Chafee

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Main Recommendations

Recommendation 1: With other nations, the United States should lead a global partnership to cut emissions from tropical deforestation in half within a decade and achieve zero net emissions from the forest sector by 2030.

Recommendation 2: The United States should create major new financial incentives and public-private partnerships to encourage forest conservation by developing nations and to finance emission reductions that the United States would otherwise have to make via far more-costly domestic strategies. Starting with \$1 billion before 2012, the U.S. should mobilize \$9 billion from the private sector and \$5 billion from the public sector annually by 2020.

Recommendation 3: The United States should adopt strong domestic climate change laws that reduce U.S. emissions 80% by 2050 and contain interim goals consistent with climate science, thereby helping to galvanize ambitious international action.

Implementation Recommendations

Recommendation 4: The United States should work to ensure that international agreements with tropical forest nations secure actions by those nations that support global emission reduction goals for forests.

Recommendation 5: U.S. policies should provide incentives for countries to move to national-scale action as quickly as possible.

Recommendation 6: The United States should work to ensure that international agreements and financial incentive programs place special emphasis on transparent and credible procedures for evaluating whether local people are participating in and benefiting from new policy frameworks.

Recommendation 7: The United States should channel new forest conservation investments to high priority areas for national security, poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation.

Recommendation 8: The United States should establish a coordinating council and designate a lead office or agency to oversee tropical forest conservation programs.



Recommendation 9: The United States should promote a global transition to full terrestrial greenhouse gas emission accounting.

Cap-and-Trade Recommendations

Recommendation 10: The United States should allocate 5% of the value of tradable emission permits in a cap-and-trade program to new international forest conservation programs.

Recommendation 11: To mobilize private capital, the United States should permit regulated U.S. companies to “offset” a substantial portion of domestic emissions through investments in tropical forests.

Recommendation 12: The pool of emission permits set aside to help control the cost of a new cap-and-trade program (the “strategic reserve”) should be large enough to manage the risk that the supply of forest carbon “offsets” may prove insufficient to stabilize prices and price spikes.

Recommendation 13: The United States should establish a financial intermediary to aggregate forest carbon offset demand and supply.