

Date _____

The Honorable John Kerry
Special Presidential Envoy for Climate
United States State Department
2201 C Street Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Special Envoy Kerry:

I am writing to you regarding the Brazilian Amazon and what the United States should do to halt the growing climate catastrophe there. Although the Biden administration has made progress in this region, it is crucial to keep the pressure up on Brazil to ensure that the country's leaders honor their commitments to protecting the Amazon and the rights of the indigenous people that live there.

Deforestation has skyrocketed since President Jair Bolsonaro assumed office in 2019. In 2020 over 11,000 square kilometers of rainforest was destroyed, an area roughly the size of Connecticut. This was also the highest rate of deforestation in 12 years, and far exceeded the level that Brazil committed to of 3,925 square kilometers of deforestations per year or less.

The Bolsonaro administration appointed Joaquim Leite as Environment Minister this June after his predecessor, Ricardo Salles, quit amidst allegations of collusion in illegal logging operations. Leite has since proposed a doubling of the budget for environmental law enforcement. The plan is designed to fulfill promises that President Bolsonaro made at the summit hosted by President Biden in April.

However, the United States needs to hold Brazil accountable for the pledges it has made. Deforestation is continuing at an alarming rate, and preliminary evidence suggests that it is down only 5% this year vs. the horrendous results from 2020. Since Brazil is still seeking financial assistance from the United States to address climate change, you should make clear that that any additional funding will be contingent upon the delivery of real results.

The Bolsonaro administration should withdraw recently enacted laws that encourage deforestation, such as those relaxing inspection on timber exports and facilitating settlement in Indigenous territories that have yet to be recognized by the government. The administration should also proceed with the collection of unpaid fines for environmental violations and reverse its support for legislation opening Indigenous territory for mining, in effect legalizing crimes against Indigenous Brazilians. I urge you to demand that President Bolsonaro comply with the above to end impunity for environmental crimes and to protect Indigenous rights.

Yours sincerely,

Address: _____