

What They're Saying: Conservation Organizations on Leader Hoyer's AMAZON21 Legislation

Earlier this week, Leader Hoyer introduced [H.R. 5830](#), the America Mitigating and Achieving Zero-emissions Originating from Nature for the 21st Century Act, or AMAZON21, which would help achieve the goal set by President Biden and over 100 world leaders at the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) of ending deforestation by 2030.

The [AMAZON 21 Act](#) would authorize a \$9 billion trust fund for the U.S. State Department to finance projects in developing nations that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including forest conservation, reforestation efforts, and projects to protect natural carbon sinks that absorb large amounts of carbon dioxide. The bill would also create a new technical assistance program at USAID to help developing countries participate in carbon markets, another tool to combat the climate crisis. Embedded throughout the bill is the importance of monitoring, reporting, and verification to ensure the environmental integrity of the projects. Moreover, the legislation includes important safeguards for protecting the rights of women, indigenous peoples, and other key local stakeholders.

Here's a look at some of the support for this critical legislation from members of the conservation community:

Conservation International:

"This year's IPCC Report was a stark reminder that if we don't protect nature, we'll fail to keep climate change below 2°C — even if we get everything else right. Photosynthesis is far more effective than any existing carbon capture device, and if humanity protects and restores vital forests and wetlands, we can cover at least 30% of our emissions reduction targets. Nonetheless, these natural climate solutions only receive 3% of total financing. We cannot continue that trajectory and hope to leave our grandchildren a habitable planet.

"Wealthy countries have an obligation to lead on climate, financing green transition and sustainable development around the world. This isn't just for the sake of expedience; it's an environmental justice issue. Too often, less industrialized nations are most susceptible to the effects of climate breakdown — drought, wildfire, bust harvests, deadly heat waves, flooding — despite being least responsible for the crisis.

"We applaud Majority Leader Hoyer's ambitious proposal, which would not only promote climate stability, but also support Indigenous peoples and local communities. Verifiable results-based payments are an excellent way to provide critical financing to developing countries engaged in nature-based conservation. Moreover, high-quality forest carbon programs, like those financed by this bill, are a proven free-market approach to keep forests standing, while also stimulating rural economies. As world leaders look to close the massive climate funding gap, we hope to see more countries take the same approach." – Dr. M. Sanjayan, CEO

World Wildlife Fund:

“Addressing the climate and nature crises requires urgent leadership from both the administration and Congress. We welcomed President Biden’s recent announcement of \$9 billion of public sector funding to conserve forests and other critical ecosystems by 2030. In addition, we are encouraged by the introduction of the AMAZON21 Act, which signals that leaders in Congress are also determined to provide the resources needed to conserve forests and other critical ecosystems. **We commend Majority Leader Hoyer for tackling the climate crisis and look forward to working with Congress to help advance and strengthen these efforts to ensure they achieve their goals for both people and nature.**” – *Josefina Braña Varela, Vice President for Forests and Forest Climate Solutions Lead*

Environmental Defense Fund:

“Halting rampant tropical deforestation is critical for meeting our climate goals and enhancing global climate ambition, as well as for safeguarding biodiversity, water supplies, agricultural production, public health, and the livelihoods and cultures of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. **That’s why EDF strongly supports the AMAZON21 Act from Majority Leader Steny Hoyer.**

”This legislation builds on the forest conservation plan announced earlier this week by President Biden, which will both encourage an all-of-society approach to prioritize forest conservation, and help create economic value for healthy forests and the communities that protect and depend on them, by setting aside \$9 billion through 2030 to support forest conservation. **The bill further builds on the momentum to protect forests set by the declaration to reverse deforestation by 2030 signed by more than 100 countries this week at COP 26. The bill includes conditional, results-based financing mechanisms and technical assistance to support developing countries’ participation in carbon markets.** It also creates a monitoring and reporting system to ensure the integrity of the forest conservation efforts and other smart policies that support forest preservation projects in developing countries.

“**The time to enact policies that halt deforestation is now. We thank Leader Hoyer for his leadership in driving real progress.**”—*Fred Krupp, President*

The Nature Conservancy:

“Our forests are the lungs of the world, and if we are going to confront the twin crises of climate and nature degradation, we need them now more than ever. Forests are irreplaceable carbon sinks and the backbones of economies around the world. Investing in the restoration and conservation of forests, grasslands and other landscapes will help sequester more carbon, reduce emissions and improve the health of communities across the globe. **We are grateful to Congressman Hoyer for introducing this important down payment on the pledge the United States and other countries have made to end deforestation by 2030.** We must reach this goal for the sake of people and the planet alike, and we urge Congress to quickly advance this investment in our future.” – *Andrew Deutz, Director, Global Policy, Institutions and Conservation Finance*

National Audubon Society:

“Climate change and deforestation are among the leading threats facing birds and people. By protecting tropical forests we can reduce carbon emissions and preserve critical habitat for birds, including the millions who migrate in and out of the United States. This bill will not only help birds but will provide support for Indigenous Peoples and communities living in climate-threatened regions.” – *Aurelio Romas, Senior Vice President, Audubon Americas*

Office of House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer, 11/4/21