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Photos, video available upon request

San Francisco Calls for State Ban of Clearcut Logging & Other Factory Tree Farming Methods

San Francisco, CA— On Tuesday June 24, 2014, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution to call on the state legislature and governor to enhance protections for California's forest watersheds by banning factory tree farming methods based on clearcut logging and toxic herbicide application.

“In keeping with San Francisco’s leadership in the environmental justice movement, I felt compelled to collaborate with the Sierra Club and environmental leaders to introduce this resolution urging the state to stop these destructive clear cutting practices. It is incumbent upon us public officials to take a stand and fight to protect our natural resources. San Francisco’s pristine Sierra water supply and greenhouse gas free hydro power, the integrity of the planet’s climate, and the security of wildlife and human health are intimately dependent on the health of our forests. I am proud that we received unanimous support from the Board of Supervisors for this measure,” said resolution sponsor Supervisor David Campos.

California’s forest watersheds store, filter and gradually release 75% of the state’s clean water supply.ⁱ Mature forests absorb up to 40% of all human caused greenhouse gas emissions.

Currently, California law allows all trees to be cut on large tracts of forest (clearcutting) followed by the planting of new trees as factory farmed industrial plantations of only one or two tree species. Toxic herbicides are applied to prevent the growth of ‘undesirable’ tree and plant species. Over a million acres in key watersheds in the Sierra Nevada, Cascade and Redwood forests are in the process of being converted to highly uniform, fire prone tree plantations.

Clearcutting and tree farming create a sterile landscape much like factory-scale corn, soy, or alfalfa fields, allowing minimal natural plant and animal biodiversity, and creating soil disturbance and run off which pollutes waterways and releases large amounts of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere. Maintaining natural, mature forests is increasingly recognized as vital in reversing climate change.ⁱⁱ

The resolution also calls for a California prohibition of the outdoor cultivation of genetically engineered tree plantations, an even more aggressive and chemically intensive form of factory tree farming for which biotech corporations are currently seeking approval at the USDAⁱⁱⁱ. Opponents warn that such genetically engineered tree plantations, if approved, could make destructive clearcutting even more profitable and desirable to the timber and tree pulp industry, and could present serious biological contamination dangers to the integrity and health of California wildlife.

Opponents of clearcutting call for trees to instead be logged using a less destructive method known as selective harvest, which involves the planned removal of carefully identified trees, while leaving overall forests intact.

Sierra Club spokesperson Juliette Beck hailed the passage of the measure, saying “This resolution against clearcutting marks the beginning of a turning point in California, away from destructive and toxic factory tree farms and toward more ecologically sustainable methods of selective logging which will preserve healthy forests, the Earth’s climate, and more stable jobs in forest products and tourism, far into the future.”

ⁱ Sierra Club, <http://www.sierraclub.org/clearcutting/downloads/Clearcutting-factsheet.pdf>

ⁱⁱ *Nature Journal*, <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/vaop/ncurrent/abs/nature12914.html> 1/29/2014

ⁱⁱⁱ Center for Food Safety http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/files/ge_pages_final_nov-1_80728.pdf Nov 2013 p 3