

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 12, 2019

William Popp  
Chargé d'Affaires  
U.S. Embassy Brasília  
SES - Av. das Nações, Quadra 801, Lote 03  
70403-900 - Brasília, D.F.

Dear Mr. Popp:

We are writing to urge your immediate engagement with the Brazilian government on supporting improvements to stewardship efforts of the Amazon Rainforest and to assist with urgent efforts to combat the tens of thousands of fires burning across the Brazilian Amazon.

The Brazilian Amazon rainforest is experiencing unprecedented stress and degradation, putting this unique and critically important natural ecosystem at risk of undergoing drastic changes that would not only transform the ecological characteristics of the region, but threaten our entire global environment. According to the Brazilian Space Agency, as of June this year, clearcutting in the Amazon has increased by 88 percent as compared to June 2018; representing a loss of more than 1,760 square miles of rainforest in an 11-month period. Adding to the crisis are more than 74,000 fires currently burning across the Brazilian Amazon that are harming air quality, darkening daytime skies in Sa Paolo, and releasing more than 200 million tons of CO2 into the atmosphere.

By all accounts, President Jair Bolsonaro is dismissing the severity of the fires exacerbating the Amazon crisis; neglecting to take action to quell the fires or enforce Brazil's conservation laws; and has gone so far as to blame his critics, without any evidence, for setting the fires. This reaction to this growing environmental crisis fits the pattern of malign neglect and exploitation of the Amazon that is threatening the health and safety of an increasing number of Brazilian citizens -- and the global population from a climate and air quality standpoint. We encourage you to stand with the majority of Brazilians who strongly favor protecting the Amazon and disapprove of President Bolsonaro's irresponsible mismanagement of Brazil's unique and ecologically critical natural resources.

While the stewardship and conservation management of the Brazilian Amazon is the responsibility of the Brazilian government, the Amazon is widely regarded as a natural resource critical to the health and sustainability of the global environment. For that reason, the U.S., and many other foreign governments have for decades contributed millions of dollars to efforts to preserve and protect the Amazon. This investment and the United States historical leadership on


global conservation make the need for you to elevate U.S. engagement on Amazon conservation a priority during this crisis. We are urging you to:

- Encourage Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro to enforce Brazil's rainforest conservation laws;
- Publicly condemn President Bolsonaro's irresponsible policies contributing to the mismanagement and unsustainable exploitation of the Amazon;
- Reinforce U.S. support for the important role civil society is playing to keep the public informed about the realities of President Bolsonaro's misguided anti-conservation policies; and
- Offer support for efforts to combat the fires that are exacerbating Brazil's environmental crisis.

We would appreciate an immediate update on all engagements with the Bolsonaro government on Amazon stewardship, and expect a substantive response to this request as soon as practicable.

Thank you for your service and attention to this matter and for taking our concerns seriously as you engage with the Brazilian government. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



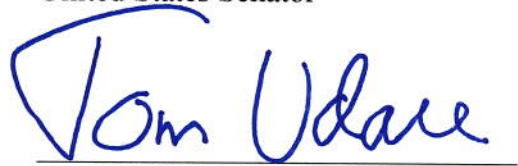
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



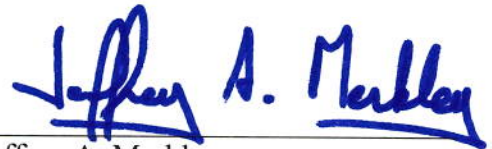
Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



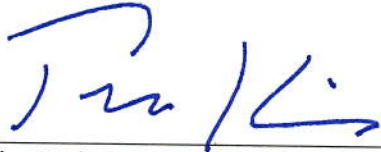
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



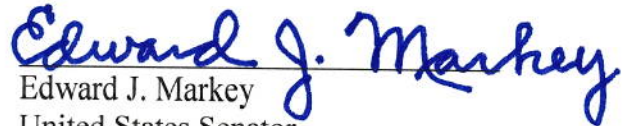
Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



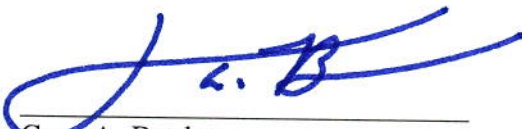
Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator