
Letter sent to the FSC Board by various organizations

Dear FSC Board members and Director

We are writing to you in relation to the upcoming consultation process to be carried out by SGS from 23-27 July as part of the certification process of Veracel's plantations in Bahia, Brazil.

These plantations are a good example of what has been defined by CIFOR as "fast wood" plantations. Having supported the work of local organizations for many years, the undersigned believe that these large-scale, fast growth eucalyptus monocultures do not meet the FSC's Principles and Criteria because of their negative social, economic and environmental impacts. This is true even more so considering the recommendations from the FSC plantations policy working group, adopted by the Board of Directors, to significantly raise the bar for FSC certification of tree plantations.

Given that the FSC's plantation certification review is still under way, we believe that this is a good opportunity for the involvement in this certification process of Board members – or designated FSC officials- in order to later inform the full Board about their findings and ensure good guidance of the technical review phase.

We are happy to put you in contact with organizations in Brazil who will accompany you to Veracel's plantations area. During the visit, you will be able to meet with local communities and have first hand knowledge about their opinion on those plantations as well as their perception of the company seeking certification.

We believe that such visit will provide you with a better understanding on why certification of plantations such as these is being opposed by so many organizations throughout the world and why the FSC loses credibility every time plantations like those of Veracel are FSC certified.

We also believe that once the board becomes aware about the serious social and environmental impacts that these plantations entail, it will reach the conclusion that they are falling far short of FSC minimum requirements and that they should thus not be certified.

The Veracel case is paradigmatic, both because of the Aracruz part-ownership of the operations as well as for the size of the plantations and international opposition to the pulp mill which these plantations are feeding. The Veracel certification assessment puts the FSC at the crossroads. Whichever road it decides to choose (to certify or not to certify) will shape the public perception of the organization.

The undersigned wish to express their serious concern about the steps taken to certifying Veracel's plantations. We urge the Board to ensure due process is followed and that the recommendations of the FSC policy phase of the plantations review are adequately considered. Issuing yet another certificate to a controversial plantations company whose plantations management from our perspective does not meet the minimum requirements of the FSC Principles and Criteria will

undermine the credibility not only of the commitment to the FSC plantations review process but also of the FSC to address the concerns voiced by both members and non-members about its certification of plantations that cannot comply with FSC Principles and Criteria.

Taking into account that Veracel's certification process has already started, and that SGS will conduct the Public Consultation between July 23 and 27th, we kindly request your answer before Tuesday 17th. of July

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Ricardo Carrere, World Rainforest Movement

Jutta Kill, FERN

Javier Baltodano/Isaac Rojas, Friends of the Earth International, Forests and Biodiversity Programme

Peter Gerhardt, Robin Wood

Wally Menne, Timberwatch

Orin Langel, Global Justice Ecology Project

Rully Syumanda, WALHI/Friends of the Earth Indonesia

Simon Counsell, Rainforest Foundation

Barbara Happe, Urgewald