[Chile: Chicago school children frighten Boise Cascade](#)

A second grade teacher in a Chicago inner-city school says she received six or seven phone calls from an official in the Boise Cascade Corporation who wanted to know why she was teaching "bad things" about his company.

The teacher, Maria Gilfillan, had been teaching her second-graders about rainforests. As a class, they talked about how they could help conserve forests. One way, they decided, was to stop using paper towels. They use the drip-dry method instead!

In a Young Environmentalist's Action bulletin published by Global Response, the students learned that the Boise Cascade Corporation plans to build the world's largest chip mill in southern Chile. Ancient rainforests, with plants and animals that exist nowhere else on earth, will be logged so that Boise Cascade can make chipboard. The Chicago second-graders decided to write letters to Boise Cascade.

"The letters were very polite," says Gilfillan. "The children expressed their concern about the rainforest and asked Boise Cascade to find a way to make their chipboard without destroying Chile's forests."

In response to the 25 letters from Gilfillan's students, Boise Cascade's Ralph Poore made six or seven calls to Gilfillan's school, demanding to speak to the teacher. "He wanted to pull me out of class; he was very insistent," Gilfillan said. When Poore finally got Gilfillan on the line, he asked her why she was teaching "bad things" about his company and threatened to "report" her to the school's principal.

Gilfillan says her inner-city second-graders are learning a lot from this experience. "It's empowering for them to know that their letters cause such a stir in a big company. They see that they can really have a big impact. It's a great thing to learn." Is she intimidated by the calls from Boise Cascade? "No, not me! Citizens have to try to get these companies to be more responsible. It's not enough to teach about the importance of rainforests. We have to do something to help protect them."

Source: Global Response