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To: Supervisory-Body <Supervisory-Body@unfccc.int>
Subject: Input to SB005 annotated agenda and related annexes

We applaud and support the UN's recent report warning against the reliance on technology as a strategy for removing carbon from the atmosphere. We agree that efforts to remove and store carbon should focus on strategies that protect, sustain and restore ecosystems, including forests.

As a nonprofit organization focused for 27 years on protecting forests in the world's largest wood producing region, the US South, we have concerns with the report's reference to carbon stored in wood products as an effective strategy for natural carbon capture and storage. Logging (aka forest management) for wood products has severely degraded forests around the world, diminishing carbon sinks and the biodiversity that underpins all life-sustaining ecosystem services. Any carbon stored in long-lived wood products represents only a fraction of the carbon that would have otherwise been stored in the forest. Moreover, when a forest is logged, not only is carbon emitted into the atmosphere, but its ability to remove and store carbon is compromised for many decades.

Recent, peer-reviewed studies have documented the extent that logging for wood products is contributing to carbon emissions and degrading forests, including carbon sinks.

For example, [this study](#) published in the esteemed journal *Nature* found:

"Deforestation is a major environmental issue¹, but far less attention has been given to the degree of anthropogenic modification of remaining forests, which reduces ecosystem integrity and diminishes many of the benefits that these forests provide^{2,3}. This is worrying since modification is potentially as significant as outright forest loss in determining overall environmental outcomes⁴. There is increasing recognition of this issue, for forests and other ecosystems, in synthesis reports by global science bodies such as the global assessment undertaken by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services⁵, and it is now essential that the scientific community develop improved tools and data to facilitate the consideration of levels of integrity in decision-making.

The associated maps demonstrate low ecological integrity across the US South and other high wood producing regions areas where forest "modification" is being driven by industrial logging. In the Southern US, wood production has both degraded natural forests and led to the loss of natural forests to biologically impoverished pine plantations which now account for roughly 1 in every 5 acres of forests. According to [this peer-reviewed study](#) logging is the single largest driver of forest carbon loss from forests in the South and across the US, even when storage in wood products is accounted for.

In [this study](#), published in *Nature* in 2017, the authors found that logging (aka forest management) is having just as big of an impact on forest carbon sinks as outright deforestation and provides data on the global potential of forest carbon sinks to remove carbon from the atmosphere. The authors discussed their findings in [this article published in the Washington Post](#):

"The study found that there are two far-less-recognized components of how humans have subtracted from Earth's

potential vegetation — and that in combination they are just as substantial as deforestation. Those are large-scale grazing and other uses of grasslands, as well as forest 'management.' With the latter, many trees and other types of vegetation are subtracted from forests — often the larger and older trees due to logging — but the forests as a whole don't disappear. They're just highly thinned out... 'This effect is quite massive.' Erb said."

We urge you to eliminate reference to wood products as a viable strategy for removing and storing carbon and instead emphasize the importance of protecting as much forests as possible -- including allowing degraded, managed forests to grow old and intact -- as delivering the biggest carbon removal and storage impact. Beyond carbon storage, restoring ecological integrity lost as a result of logging for wood production is vital to optimizing forests' ability to help protect communities against impending climate shocks including heat waves, floods and droughts.

Thank you for your consideration.

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