

Federal Ministry of
Food and Agriculture

Minister Julia Klöckner

11055 Berlin

10th August 2019

Experts, forest owners and representatives of associations demand a turn away from reforestation and timber factories

Dear Minister Klöckner,

The current situation of the forest in Germany is worrying. It is a forest crisis not only driven by climate change. The current crisis management of the forestry industry is backward-looking and harmful to the forest. The declaration announced at the meeting of ministers in Moritzburg can be described as a 'Moritzburg declaration of bankruptcy'. We call on the state forestry industry to, instead of expensive rushed actions, finally carry out an expert analysis of its own work and to involve all stakeholders in this process. What is called for is a consistent departure from plantation forestry and a radical shift towards a management that treats the forest as an ecosystem and no longer as a wood factory.

On 1st August 2019, five forestry ministers of CDU and CSU-led states adopted a so-called "master plan" for the forest in Germany, which was affected by heat, bark beetles, fire and drought. As of 2020, the federal government is to make 800 million euros available as a reaction to climate change. This money is to be used to repair the damage caused, reforest the damaged areas and carry out 'climate-adapted' forest conversion - including the use of non-native tree species that have not yet been cultivated in the forest. Research should therefore focus on on tree species suitability and forest plant breeding in the future - keyword: 'Climate-adapted forest of the future 2100'.

Remarkably, the damage caused primarily by the extreme drought of 2018 is attributed solely to climate change. Climate change is meeting a forest that is systemically ill due to the planting of non-native tree species, species poverty, monocultures, uniform structure, average low age, mechanical soil compaction, drainage etc. A healthy, resistant forest would look differently! The master plan emphasizes: sustainable, multifunctional and 'active' forest management remains indispensable - and thereby means that its unnatural state cannot be changed. Reference is made to the 'carbon storage and substitution effects' of wood products. The use of wood, e.g. in the construction industry, should be increased and thus the demand for wood should be further fueled – while knowing that the forest in Germany already cannot meet this demand. In fact, forest owners are suffering from poor timber prices due to an oversupply of trunk wood on the world market.

All these demands make clear: the current forestry strategy, which has been practiced for decades, should not change in principle. The concept is simple: cut down trees - plant trees. At best, the 'design' of the future artificial forests consisting of perfectly calculated tree species mixtures, that

are believed to survive climate change without damages, can be changed. In all seriousness, the intention is to continue selling the public a so-called 'future strategy' to save the forest. This strategy seamlessly follows the model of a wood factory, that is met with general rejection and must be regarded as a failure in view of the coniferous plantations that are currently collapsing on a large scale. An essential part of the forests that have currently died is exactly the part that was reestablished in 1947 as coniferous monocultures on a much larger area than today. There is only one difference to the situation at the time: considerable amounts of money are to be made available from taxes for forest owners this time.

Climate change is progressing, and this, without a doubt, has massive impacts on all terrestrial ecosystems, including forests. To pretend that the last two years of drought alone caused the disaster is too cheap. On closer inspection, the disaster is also the result of decades of a forestry focused on conifers - in a country that was once naturally dominated by mixed deciduous forests. People do not like to admit that for more than 200 years they have relied on the wrong species of commercial tree (spruce) and have also created artificial, ecologically highly unstable and thus high-risk forest ecosystems. A whole branch of business has become dependent on coniferous wood. And now the German coniferous timber industry is on the verge of bankruptcy.

It would only have been honest and also a sign of political greatness if you and the forestry ministers in Moritzburg had declared: Yes, our forestry industry has made mistakes in the past, and yes, we are ready for a relentless analysis that takes into account not only purely silvicultural, but also forest-ecological aspects. Instead, you have confined yourselves to pre-stamped excuses that are already familiar to everyone and that lack any self-critical reflection.

Clear is: We finally need resting periods for the forest in Germany, which has been exploited for centuries. We need a new, ecologically oriented concept for future forest - not a hectic 'forest conversion', but simply forest development closer towards nature. This gives the forest as an ecosystem the necessary leeway to self-regulate and react to the emerging environmental changes. We need a systemic forest management that is no less profitable than the present one, but must be substantially more stable and resistant to foreseeable environmental changes. The aid for forest owners that all citizens are now required to pay through their taxes is only politically justified in the interest of common good, if the forests of the future that are being promoted by it, do not end up in the next disaster, some of which is produced by the forest management itself.

That is why the signatories request from the the Federal Government, and in particular you, Mrs Klöckner, a **master plan worthy of the name:**

1. On disaster areas (mainly in public forests!) reestablishment through natural forest development (ecological succession), among other things with pioneer tree species, is to be brought about. In private forests, ecological succession for reestablishment must be purposefully promoted. Larger bare areas should be planted with a maximum of 400 to 600 large plants of native species per hectare in order to permit ecological succession parallelly.
2. To promote ecological succession, the areas should no longer be completely and mechanically cleared; as much wood as possible should be left in the stand (to promote optimum soil and germ bed formation, soil moisture storage and natural protection against browsing). In private forests, the abandonment of use in disaster areas should be specifically promoted for ecological reasons and in order to relieve the burden on the timber market.
3. Regarding the promotion of reestablishment plantings in private forests: priority for native tree species (of regional origin); choose wide planting distances in order to leave enough space for the development of pioneer species.

4. For the forests of the future: Minimize thinning (low-input principle), build up stocks through targeted development towards old thick trees, protect the inner forest climate / promote self-cooling function (should have highest priority due to rapidly progressing climate change!), prohibit heavy machinery, refrain from further road construction and expansion, permit and promote natural self-regulatory development processes in the cultivated forest and on (larger) separate areas in the sense of a compound system; drastically reduce the density of ungulate game (reform of hunting laws).
5. Like in the field of organic agriculture, which has been established since the 1980s, the crisis of our forests should be the reason today to transform at least two existing forestry-related universities. They should be turned into universities for interdisciplinary forest ecosystem management. This is a contribution not only to the further development of forestry science and silviculture in Germany, but also of global importance! The goal must be to produce wood through largely natural forest production and to start with it here in Germany, the birthplace of forestry.

Motto: **SYSTEMIC FOREST ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT INSTEAD OF WOOD FACTORY**

The undersigned

Dr. Franz Alt (Journalist und Autor) - **Bigi Alt** (www.sonnenseite.com) - **Jana Ballenthien** (Waldreferentin, ROBIN WOOD) - **Martin Bertram** (Forstwissenschaftler) - **Claudia Blank** (Sprecherin der BundesBürgerInitiative WaldSchutz, BBIWS) - **Wilhelm Bode** (Autor und vormals Leiter der Saarländischen Forstverwaltung; Leit.Min.Rat a.D.) - **Klaus Borger** (Assessor des Forstdienstes und Staatssekretär a.D., Vorsitzender Forstbetriebsgemeinschaft Saar-Hochwald w.V.) - **Reinhard Dalchow** (Pfr. i. R., Bundesvorstand Grüne Liga, Mitglied der AG Kirchenforst) - **Susanne Ecker** (Sprecherin BI Schützt den Pfälzerwald) - **Gotthard Eitler** (Förster i.R.) - **Hermann Edelmann** (Mitgründer *Pro* Regenwald) - **Dr. Lutz Fähser** (Forstamtsleiter i.R., Lübeck) - **Herbert Fahrnbauer** (Sprecher BI gegen die Waldzerstörung) - **Dr. Andreas Fichtner** (Wissenschaftler, Leuphana Universität Lüneburg) - **Professor Dr. Maximilian Gege** (Vorsitzender B.A.U.M.) – **Peter Gerhardt** (denkhausbremen) - **Franz Gregetz** (BundesBürgerInitiative WaldSchutz) - **Manfred Großmann** (Leiter Nationalpark Hainich) - **Jessica und Hakan Günder** (Bürgerinitiative: BI fightforforest Odenwald) - **Sylvia Hamberger** (Gesellschaft für Ökologische Forschung) - **Mark Harthun** (Fachbereichsleiter Naturschutz, Stellvertr. Landesgeschäftsführer NABU Landesverband Hessen) - **Dr. Annette Hartmann** (Baumaktivistin Geisenfeld) - **Hermann Graf Hatzfeldt** (Waldbesitzer, ehem. Vorsitzender FSC-Deutschland) - **Gaby und Joachim Heger** (Sprecher Bürgerinitiative Lachwald-erhalten.de) - **Hajo Hoffmann** (Minister a.D.) – **Birgit Huvendieck** (BI Baumschutz Braunschweig) - **Prof. Dr. Pierre Ibisch** (Direktor Centre for Economics and Ecosystem Management an der Hochschule für nachhaltige Entwicklung, Vorstand Deutsche Umweltstiftung, Vorstand European Beech Forest Network) - **Dr. Lebrecht Jeschke** (ehem. Direktor des Landesnationalparkamtes Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) - **Eberhard Johl** (BI-Baumschutz Hildesheim) - **Martin Kaiser** (Geschäftsführer Greenpeace) – **Dr. Bernd Kempf** (Bürgerbewegung Freunde des Spessarts, BBfS) - **Tanja Keßels** (Protect, Natur-, Arten- und Landschaftsschutz e.V.) – **Jutta Kill** (Biologin, Beraterin für soziale Bewegungen, Autorin) - **Kerstin Klein** (BI Stadtwald Raunheim) - **Regina Klein** (BI Waldschutz im Taunus) - **Armin Kohler** (Verein **Entwicklung Lebensraum** Kißlegg e.V.) - **PD Dr. Werner Kratz** (FU Berlin, stv. Vorsitzender NABU Brandenburg) – **Wolfgang Kuhlmann** (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Regenwald und Artenschutz) - **Max V. Limbacher** (M.A. Ortsvorsteher Kirkel Limbach) - **Dr. Siegfried Klaus** (AG

Waldnaturschutz im NABU Thüringen) - **Prof. Dr. Hans D. Knapp** (DirProf.a.D., Succow Stiftung, Vorstand European Beech Forest Network, EuroNatur) - **Heinz Kowalski** (Stellv. Landesvorsitzender NABU NRW, Sprecher des NABU-Bundesfachausschusses Ornithologie und Vogelschutz) - **Sandra Kraus** (Ameisenhegerin Homburg) - **Michael Kunkel** (BN Ortsgruppe Heigenbrücken) - **Dr. Liebhard Löffler** (Vorsitzender Verein Nationalpark Steigerwald e.V.) - **Dr. Petra Ludwig-Sidow** (Dipl.Geol., Wald-AG des NABU Ammersbek) – **Jürgen Maier** (Geschäftsführer, Forum Umwelt & Entwicklung) - **László Maraz** (Kordinator Dialogplattform Wald/ AG Wälder, Forum Umwelt & Entwicklung) – **Michael Müller** (Parlamentarischer *Staatssekretär a.D.* im. Bundesumweltministerium, Bundesvorsitzender NaturFreunde Deutschland) - **Peter Naumann** (Bergwaldprojekt e.V.) - **Prof. Dr. Kai Niebert** (Präsident DNR - Deutscher Naturschutzring) - **Dr. Jörg Noetzel** (Sprecher der Bürgerinitiative Zukunft Stuttgarter Wald) - **Dr. Lars Opgenoorth** (Ökologe, Philipps-Universität Marburg, European Beech Forest Network) - **Norbert Panek** (Agenda zum Schutz deutscher Buchenwälder) - **Silvia Roelcke** (waldproblematik.de) - **Max Rossberg** (Chairman European Wilderness Society) - **Birgit Huvendieck** (BI Baumschutz Braunschweig) – **Ulrike Rothbarth** (BI Baumschutz Braunschweig) - **Doz. Dr. Wolfgang Scherzinger** (ehem. Wissenschaftler/Zoologe des Nationalparks Bayerischer Wald) - **Edmund Schultz** (Waldschützer, Braunschweig) – **Evelyn Schönheit & Jupp Trauth** (Forum Ökologie & Papier) - **Jörg Sommer** (Vorstandsvorsitzer Deutsche Umweltstiftung) - **Dr. Georg Sperber** (ehemaliger Leites des Forstamts Ebrach) - **Wolfgang Stoiber** (Vorsitzender, Naturschutz und Kunst – Leipziger Auwald e.V. - NuKLA) - **Gerlinde Straka** (Projektkoordinatorin Wald, Naturschutzgroßprojekt Hohe Schrecke) - **Knut Sturm** (Forstamtsleiter, Stadtwald Lübeck) – **Prof. em. Dr. Michael Succow** (Stiftungsratsvorsitzender Michael Succow Stiftung) - **Walter Trefz** (Förster) - **Olaf Tschimpke** (Präsident, NABU- Naturschutzbund Deutschland e.V.) - **Florian Tully** (2. Vorstand Verein Nationalpark Steigerwald e.V.) - **Silvia Wagner** (Sprecherin BI pro Ettersberg) - **Dr. Torsten Welle** (Naturwald Akademie) - **Dr. Volkhard Wille** (Vorstand, OroVerde – Die Tropenwaldstiftung) - **Peter Wohlleben** (Förster und Autor, Wohllebens Waldakademie)