



## RESOLUTION #12

### **TITLE: CENTRAL MEXICO'S "WATER FOREST": WILDERNESS AREA OF MAXIMUM NATIONAL PRIORITY GIVEN THE ECOLOGICAL SERVICES IT RENDERS TO OVER 20 MILLION PEOPLE**

#### **WHEREAS**

- Found on the mountains stretching among three political entities: Federal District, the State of Mexico and the State of Morelos, the forest known as "Water Forest" (Bosque de Agua) provides water and other vital environmental services to a fifth of Mexico's total population
- Over 70% of the water used in the Metropolitan Area of the Mexico Valley is extracted from the underground aquifer that is replenished by the "Water Forest"
- Its 250,000 hectares harbor 1.98% of the world's biodiversity of flora and fauna species, 10% of its species are endemic; and it supplies 100% of the water of two RAMSAR sites: Cienegas de Lerma and the World Heritage Site of Xochimilco
- Conservation of the "Water Forest" is a matter of NATIONAL SECURITY because Mexico City is the seat of the country's government, economic/financial activity and highest population concentration. The over-exploited aquifer is resulting in the break-up of the impermeable clay layer above it, causing urban pollution to filter into this vital aquifer
- The "Water Forest" is seriously threatened mostly by urban sprawl, highway projects and unsustainable logging, among many other ills
- The lack of a REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN allows for chaotic development and for the establishment of projects that threaten the wilderness' capacity to provide environmental services of vital importance to adjacent urban areas
- Although 96% of the "Water Forest" is nominally protected and deemed of priority importance, its conservation is insufficient, while abundant, persistent and well-funded public and private projects are set on developing the area
- Authorized but not yet built, the Lerma-Tres Mariás highway project is planned to run across the forest's most important closed-drainage watershed, though alternative existing highway projects override its need

#### **THEREFORE**

- Given the inseparable, direct relationship between wilderness areas and water supply, and that ecosystem conservation is the best option for preserving the quantity and quality of water
- And given that urban areas have an enormous debt with and dependency upon wilderness, particularly natural areas adjacent to large cities

#### **RESOLUTION**

- From the point of view of environmental services, Mexico's "Water Forest" is a wilderness area of **MAXIMUM PRIORITY** and a matter of **NATIONAL SECURITY**
- The conservation and sustainable management of Mexico's "Water Forest" should be addressed with a *REGIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN*, developed and implemented with effective public participation of local communities and all other relevant stakeholders
- Mexico's federal authorities, as well as the governments of the Estado de Morelos, Estado de México and Distrito Federal, are advised to:
  - Respect the forest's condition as a *Conservation Priority Area*, fostering its sustainable management
  - Consider revoking the authorization to build the Lerma-Tres Mariás highway project until the *Regional Strategic Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of the "Water Forest"* is officially approved
- The **MINISTRY FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT (SEMARNAT)** is advised to:
  - Create a work-group focused on fund-raising and on harnessing other forms of support for the "Water Forest", such as negotiating with SCT to obtain a percentage of tolls paid by users of existing highways that run through the "Water Forest"
  - Invite national and international wilderness conservation organizations to participate and carry out projects for the conservation of the "Water Forest"

## **PROPOSER**

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