

## **Ex-ministers condemn attempt to allow sugarcane in the Amazon**

**Five former Environment ministers and one of Brazil's most important climate scientists have expressed over the weekend their criticism to the proposed Senate bill. Read what they said:**

*"When we did the sugarcane zoning, we debated extensively within the government and with the productive sector and argued that there was more than enough land to double the sugarcane production without invading food production areas, the Upper Paraguay River Basin and the Amazon. Moving on these areas would maculate all the Brazilian ethanol production. This argument has been accepted. It is unbelievable that, nine years later, with all the commitments Brazil assumed in Paris, the same people will resurrect the same proposal to release sugarcane cultivation in the Amazon."*

**Carlos Minc**, former Minister of Environment

*"This bill follows a trend observed in recent years of resumption of policy decisions on land use by economic interests of agriculture and livestock, aiming at the continued expansion of the agricultural commodity frontier. If approved, it will be another deforestation vector, directly or indirectly. There is no economic reason, as any possible growth in the demand for bioethanol or sugar can be met with increased productivity where sugar cane already is cultivated. On the other hand, it will be a short-lived industry. Electric vehicles, including vessels, are projected to become more and more common and should dominate the world market entirely until the decade of 2040, at most. The primary destination of the 150,000 km<sup>2</sup>-plus area of deforested and already abandoned by livestock and agriculture should be forest restoration, in order to take the critically important role of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thus mitigating global warming."*

**Carlos Nobre**, member of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences, of the US National Academy of Sciences and former president of Brazil's Agency for Post-Graduate Education (Capes).

*"This proposal is to shoot the Brazilian biofuel policy in the foot since it exposes both RenovaBio and Brazil's commitments in the Paris Agreement. The Brazilian ethanol does not need this. More than a setback, it is a shame."*

**Izabella Teixeira**, former Minister of Environment

*"The Bill 626/2011 mortally wounds the agroecological zoning of sugarcane and creates a new vector of pressure on the Amazonian biome. This is another setback that should not thrive."*

**José Carlos Carvalho**, former Minister of Environment

*"The release of sugarcane farming in the Amazon is the last straw for its destruction. This is added to the resumption of the increase in deforestation, which reached 45% from 2012 to 2017. The bill follows the dismantling of the socio-environmental governance of the country, used as a bargaining chip in the old-style 'anything goes' of all old politics. This is not even in the interests of the sugar and alcohol sector, whose strategic agenda requires developing technology to increase yield and generate ethanol with bagasse pulp, multiplying production without increasing the planted area."*

**Marina Silva**, former Minister of Environment

*"It is necessary to strongly condemn the attempt to undermine one of the few successful initiatives regarding the rational zoning of sugarcane production and agriculture in general. The approval of this unnecessary and pernicious project would constitute a loophole to dismantle all zoning and demoralize future efforts to extend the idea to other sectors such as livestock farming."*

**Rubens Ricupero**, former Minister of Environment