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: Ciénegas 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 Marias 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 Marias 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”.

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