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**US CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES URGE DEPT OF  
TREASURY TO ENCOURAGE IMF AND WORLD BANK TO  
REVIEW CONSTRUCTION OF OIL ACCESS ROAD IN  
EQUADOR'S YASUNI NATIONAL PARK**

***Access Road Will Cause Irreversible Damage to Earth's Most Biodiverse  
Forest and its Indigenous Peoples***

**July 8, 2005, Yasuni National Park, Ecuador.** Earlier this week, U.S. Representatives Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Jim Leach (R-IA) submitted a letter to the U.S. Department of the Treasury urging a dialogue with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to review whether the construction of an oil access road violates their own policies on environmentally sustainable growth and indigenous rights.

The letter, sent to Treasury Secretary John Snow, expresses concern over the actions of the IMF and World Bank that encourage oil development in the Ecuadorian Amazon without appropriate protections for the rainforest environment and its indigenous peoples.

“We are concerned, as we think the Treasury Department will be, that such unrestricted development could lead to severe and irreversible damage to both the Yasuní rainforest, the most biodiverse forest known on earth, and to the health, welfare, and sovereign rights of the Huaorani, the indigenous hunter-gatherers of this region,” wrote Maloney and Leach.

In April 2000, the Government of Ecuador was granted \$300 million loan by the IMF, directly followed by an additional \$425 million from the World Bank. As a precondition of these loans, the Government was required to pass legislation which allowed international oil companies to build and operate pipelines. In May of this year, Petrobras, the Brazilian national oil company, began construction on a new access road into Yasuní National Park.

There has already been considerable opposition to the Petrobras road by indigenous people and scientists. The region's leading scientists expect that the road will cause deforestation, illegal hunting, and severe pollution of the drinking water of the local inhabitants. On May 18, 2005, the President of the Association of Huaorani Women called for a moratorium stopping the Petrobras project. Huaorani leaders are expected to hold a demonstration on Monday, July 11, to protest the construction.

Leading scientists have suggested viable alternatives to the current Petrobras plan which would allow oil development with much less environmental damage. IMF and World

Bank policies dictate that the health effects of the new road on the Huaorani and the adverse effects it will have on their culture and way of life should be considered and that the Huaorani should have a meaningful opportunity to make their opposition to the road heard.

“We’re simply asking the IMF and the World Bank to review and follow the policies they themselves have drafted,” said Carl Ross, director of Save America’s Forests, a U.S.-based NGO working in support of these efforts.

For more information on efforts to protect the Yasuní rainforest, visit [www.yasuni.ws](http://www.yasuni.ws).

To see a pdf of the Congressional letter, see <http://www.saveamericasforests.org/Yasuni/News/Articles/7-6-05.USCongressLetter.pdf>

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