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15 July 2019

Dear Ms. Meyers,

Thank you for your message of July 1 inviting us to respond to issues you plan to include in an upcoming issue of your newsletter. We welcome constructive dialogue with responsible organizations. Before commenting on the articles you mentioned, I'd like to introduce you to Robinson Lumber Company, a 126-year-old family owned company based in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA.

Contrary to widely-held beliefs that "cutting down trees is bad for the environment" we believe that promoting the use of renewable resources is critical to the future of planet, and that there is no more obvious and prevalent renewable resource than wood. Growing trees sequester carbon and emit oxygen. When trees are harvested, their lumber becomes a carbon sink, and when new trees are planted, their growth restarts the carbon sequestration cycle. With over 7 billion people, responsible, sustainable, and compliant forestry is crucial to maintaining our forests as the "lungs of our planet".

Wood products are our livelihood and as such we are keenly aware of threats to the industry. We work within industry organizations (ITTO, AIMEX, NHLA, NWFA) to promote the use of legal hardwood resources worldwide. Our volume of FSC certified material has increased every year since we first earned our certification in 2001. We operate legally with a robust system for due diligence to protect us and our clients around the world from non-compliant timber.

As evidence of our successful efforts we, nor any of our 1,200 clients in over sixty countries, have ever been found in violation of the Lacey Act or EUTR on any of our shipments. Now to address the articles.

Your message mentions five articles which you plan to include:

1. "Complicity in Destruction II: How northern consumers and financiers enable Bolsonaro's assault on the Brazilian Amazon", Amazon Watch, 24 April 2019
2. "China, EU, US trading with Brazilian firms fined for Amazon deforestation: report", Mongabay, 6 May 2019
3. "Cumplicidade na destruição: como os consumidores e financiadores do norte permitem o ataque do governo Bolsonaro à Amazônia brasileira", Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil-APIB, Maio 2019
4. "Empresas europeias e norte-americanas estão ligadas à responsáveis pela invasão à terras indígenas e desmatamento na Amazônia", Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil-APIB, 3 de maio de 2019
5. "Índios propõem boicote a empresas que negociam com invasores de reservas", Época, 29 de abril de 2019

Article #1 makes allegations against a Robinson supplier, Tradelink. Tradelink Group's response to that report provides detailed clarification and additional information effectively countering each allegation. If you have not had the opportunity to see that response, I've attached it separately. Note that it contains both a summary of Tradelink's response to slave labor allegations and links containing detailed responses and documentation. I can add that Tradelink have advised us that they have been very aggrieved by the Amazon Watch report considering the damaging inaccuracies contained in it.

Article #2 does not mention Robinson Lumber Company. It repeats allegations contained in article #1.

Article #3 is the Portuguese version of Article #1.

Article #4 does not mention Robinson Lumber Company. It references article #3 and provides no new information.

Article #5 does not mention Robinson Lumber Company. Like #4, it references article #3 and provides no new information.

In this age of social media and fake news, perhaps it should come as no surprise that a single biased and counterfactual report can spawn five, soon to be six, related articles that somehow omit any of the subsequent responses provided by those accused, or other facts available in the public domain.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment and we look forward to reading your newsletter.

Sincerely,

Joe Buckhaults

President  
ROBINSON LUMBER COMPANY, INC.