

Jason Gray Joins the Emmett Institute as Project Director, Governors'
Climate and Forests Task Force | 1



Jason Gray joins the Emmett Institute
this month

This month, the Emmett Institute is excited to welcome climate policy expert Jason Gray as the newest member of our team. In his new role as Project Director of the [Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force](#), Jason will help direct a major sub-national coalition focused on reducing tropical deforestation and advancing inclusive, equitable, low-emissions development at jurisdiction scale. Jason's work will be conducted in collaboration with other UCLA partners, including the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability (IoES), Center for Tropical Research, and Congo Basin Institute.

In his new position, Jason will work closely with our faculty co-director William Boyd to direct the activities of the GCF Task Force, where William serves as project lead. The task force is a coalition of 38 states and provinces working to protect tropical forests, reduce emissions from deforestation, and promote rural development that maintains forests. The task force was created in 2008 by California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and nine other governors from Brazil, Indonesia, and the U.S. who recognized the critical role of tropical forests in addressing climate change. Today, the coalition's member states and provinces cover one-third of the world's tropical forests and the task force has supported jurisdictional strategies and investment plans in each tropical region, harnessing the political leadership of committed governors and empowering civil servants and their civil society partners to build and maintain successful sub-national programs.

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The GCF Task Force includes 38 member states across 10 countries.
Source: GCFTF

Jason previously served as chief of California's cap-and-trade program, rounding out a 12-year career at the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the agency tasked with formulating and implementing the state's world-leading climate policies. In this position, Jason oversaw a staff of more than 30 experts and managers tasked with designing and implementing California's sophisticated carbon market. He also served as the manager of the program's market monitoring section and as an attorney supporting the development and implementation of climate and air quality regulations at CARB.

Later this month, Jason will be in Manaus, the capital of Amazonas, Brazil, to support the task force's 12th annual meeting - its first in two years. The meeting comes on the heels of a [pledge by more than 100 countries](#) at COP26 in Glasgow to end deforestation in the next eight years. Also at COP26, governors in the GCF Task Force unveiled the [Manaus Action Plan](#), a policy guide for member states to reduce deforestation, create sustainable, forest-based economies, and protect the rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities. The [invite-only meeting in Manaus this month](#) - co-led by the state of Amazonas - will gather member-state governors and leaders from the private sector, civil society, Indigenous peoples and local communities, national governments, and international organizations to discuss practical steps for putting the action plan into operation. The Emmett Institute is co-sponsoring the meeting.

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Jason Gray (far right) is presented with the GCF Task Force Everyday Hero award in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, Indonesia in 2017. Photo credit: GCF Task Force

Jason has worked with the GCF Task Force for more than a decade, representing CARB at coalition meetings, where he shared expertise and built relationships with peer civil servants from tropical forest state agencies. In 2017, Jason was [presented with the task force's "Everyday Hero" award](#), given to a civil servant who embodies the coalition's commitment to public service, forest protection, and rural livelihoods. "Jason is a quiet leader - an everyday hero doing the hard, day-to-day work that is so important to keeping his agency and the GCF moving forward on climate and forests," according to the award citation.

Jason received his J.D. from Lewis & Clark Law School, with a certificate in environmental and natural resources law, and a B.A. from Gonzaga University in biology and French. After college, Jason spent several years in Gabon with the Peace Corps and WWF, where he designed and implemented a two-year environmental education curriculum for teachers, built capacity of local environmental and fisheries nonprofits, and supported wildlife conservation initiatives. Prior to joining CARB, Jason worked in private practice, as a legal intern for Mercy Corps, and as a law clerk for the Center for Biological Diversity.

Jason is the second CARB alumnus to join the Emmett Institute in recent months - Mary Nichols, former chair of the agency, [joined the Emmett Institute](#) in December as distinguished counsel.