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This [week](#), California Governor Gavin Newsom led a high-level meeting with Brazil's Environment Secretary Marina Silva to expand the long-running partnerships that exist between the Golden State and the largest country of Latin America. The meeting resulted in a new [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) between both governments to continue to collaborate on climate action. Although this MOU is between a national government and a sub-national government, it highlights the growing power of governors and states on climate – the mission of the Governors' Climate and Forests Task Force.

### **Why does this matter?**

Despite increasing (and [foreseen](#)) impacts from the burning of fossil fuels and the clearing and converting forests and other landscapes, climate action is [stalling](#) in many parts of the world, including at the national level in the United States (see **Ann Carlson's** recent [post](#) on US EPA's efforts to repeal the endangerment finding). In the face of this backslide, leadership at the [subnational level](#) is essential to fill some of the gap.

At the same time, national action is obviously vital too. Brazil demonstrated this through its recent [announcement](#) at the UN General Assembly of a \$1 billion contribution into its innovative [Tropical Forest Forever Facility](#). (Stay tuned for more posts from UCLA on the TFFF in the next several weeks.)

The coming together of California – the [fourth largest economy](#) in the world – and Brazil – the [largest economy](#) of Latin America and the country with the [largest expanse](#) of tropical forests – to increase their partnership efforts to reduce deforestation, protect biodiversity, and increase sustainable employment opportunities for their people is a terrific boost for those of us working to support and advance climate solutions.

### **Building on ongoing partnerships**

The new MOU calls out two areas of ongoing partnerships upon which this collaboration will build: California and Brazilian states work “to protect forests, reduce greenhouse gases and air pollutant emissions, and enhance livelihoods across the world’s forests in the context of the [Governors’ Climate and Forests \(GCF\) Task Force](#),” and they “work together to reduce methane emissions in the context of the Subnational Methane Action Coalition ([SMAC](#)).” These efforts are supported by Secretariats at UCLA and UC Berkeley, respectively.

The GCF Task Force was founded by California, 5 Brazilian States, and 2 Indonesian provinces more than 15 years ago. It now includes 45 member states and provinces (including 9 Brazilian states) from 11 countries. Representative examples of recent state-level action in Brazil and California include:

- [Acre, Brazil](#): establishing robust [benefits sharing](#) around carbon market/payment-for-ecosystem services, where 72% of any funds received will go to Indigenous peoples and local communities; and advancing a historic jurisdictional REDD+ [agreement](#) with Standard Chartered bank.
- [Amazonas, Brazil](#): the single largest subnational tropical forest jurisdiction, Amazonas recently obtained [approval](#) for a \$592 million plan with the World Bank, contingent on the state’s efforts to strengthen bioeconomy enterprises for communities and small businesses around sustainable forest products, tighten enforcement against illegal activities, and updating fiscal rules so that funds are distributed based on strong environmental results.
- [Para, Brazil](#): as the host of the upcoming COP30, Para has been actively working to complete its community consultation processes to advance on

### [jurisdictional REDD+](#)

- [Tocantins, Brazil](#): the first subnational jurisdiction to [meet](#) rigorous jurisdictional REDD+ standards.
- [California](#): as I wrote about last week, the state's recent [extension](#) of its signature economy-wide Cap-and-Invest Program, including statutory recognition of the importance of nature based solutions. This program will continue to serve as an important model for state and national governments on the design and implementation of carbon market frameworks

The SMAC also includes 5 Brazilian states, among its 21 member states and provinces, all working to slash methane emissions and combat climate change.

### **What does this new Memorandum advance?**

The new MOU will focus on the following areas of cooperation:

- Carbon market development, including high-quality offsets
- Clean transportation
- Clean energy
- Nature-based solutions
- Cultural heritage (building on efforts underway in both Brazil and California, and the GCF Task Force, for better engagement between subnational and national governments with Indigenous Peoples and local communities)
- Sustainable urban planning
- Climate change resilience
- Circular economy and waste management
- Air quality management

These efforts will be led primarily by California's Environmental Protection Agency and Brazil's Federal Ministry of the Environment.

This type of collaboration is not new for either California or Brazil; but the renewed commitment, increased scope, and timing are encouraging as the world looks for positive examples of action and partnership.