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Speaker Pelosi Balances Carbon Travel Budget with the Pacific Forest Trust

Washington D.C. --A Congressional delegation led by U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi that is traveling to Europe to investigate the causes and solutions of climate change is ensuring it will balance its carbon budget with CO₂ emissions reductions generated from the Pacific Forest Trust's (PFT) *Van Eck Forest Project*, the first that meets California's tough forest-based emissions reduction standards, which are a model for the nation.

"As a climate change fact-finding investigation, it is essential that we lead by example and neutralize our travel-generated carbon emissions. I am pleased that we could do so with confidence by working with the Pacific Forest Trust," announced Speaker Pelosi.

The Speaker is able to neutralize the delegation's carbon emissions by acquiring emissions reductions from PFT's *Van Eck Forest Project*, which uses the carbon storage capabilities of a working redwood forest. This is California's first forest project that meets the strict standards of California's Climate Action Registry (CCAR). As a result, Speaker Pelosi is ensuring that the equivalent CO₂ emissions from the delegation's air travel will be permanently removed from the atmosphere by the Van Eck forest, which, in order to meet the CCAR rules, is protected by a conservation easement and managed to significantly increase net carbon stores.

"CO₂ in our atmosphere comes from two main sources: fossil fuels and forest loss," said PFT president Laurie Wayburn. "To successfully address climate change, we must consider both sources. By protecting our existing forestland from further loss and by providing real, verifiable and permanent carbon reductions through the effective management of forests for climate benefits. That is why we are so pleased that Speaker Pelosi has recognized the dual values of forest conservation and forest management advanced in the Van Eck Project as a key tools in reducing global warming," added Wayburn.

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Owned by the Fred M. van Eck Forest Foundation, the 2,100-acre Van Eck Forest in Humboldt County, CA, is a working redwood forest conserved and managed by the Pacific Forest Trust to increase carbon stores, restore biodiversity and old growth qualities as well as provide critical habitat for endangered species. As a result of PFT's forest management standards for carbon storage, 500,000 more tons of CO₂ will be removed from the atmosphere than would otherwise occur over the next 100 years. The Speaker's purchase helps support greater stewardship and restoration of these forests than would otherwise happen.

Forests like the Van Eck provide climate benefits by absorbing CO₂ from the atmosphere and storing it as carbon in trees for hundreds of years or longer. Working forests are especially effective at storing CO₂ as they grow older, resulting in substantially greater storage of CO₂ than their younger counterparts. Today's forests are the largest, most expandable, natural carbon sinks on the globe. As such, they can and should play a significant role in the strategy to stabilize our climate.

Speaker Pelosi, who will be paying for the delegation's carbon reductions from her personal funds, joins an impressive bipartisan team of California climate leaders who have recognized the power of working forests to help balance their own carbon budgets through the *Van Eck Forest Project*, including California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, California Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez (D) and California Environmental Protection Secretary Linda Adams.

"We all have a part to play in reducing our own carbon footprint," said PFT managing director Connie Best. "Healing the climate will require many different actions, including preventing forest loss and increasing net sequestration through climate management of forests. California's standards for forest carbon projects guarantee real, lasting emissions reductions, now, when we need them most. While we work to find technological solutions for our energy and transportation needs over the next decades, the 'biotech' of forests can play an especially important role," concluded Best.

The Pacific Forest Trust (PFT) is the nation's leading non-profit organization dedicated to protecting America's private working forests for their many public benefits, including climate stabilization. To learn more about the Pacific Forest Trust and our campaigns, please visit www.pacificforest.org.

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