

Press release:

Amazon projects pose risks to Brazil and the World: Summary of Pereira et al. 2025

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Despite the decrease in Brazil's Amazon deforestation rates since the country's current presidential administration took office in January 2023 the Brazilian government's present and planned projects imply large amounts of deforestation and increased risk to global climate. The positive changes under the presidency of Luiz Inácia Lula da Silva (known as "Lula") reflect the results command-and-control operations by Brazil's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, lead by the environmentalist Marina Silva, to repress illegal deforestation. However, the rest of the federal government is virtually all promoting or planning to promote projects that imply greater emissions of greenhouse gases, including those from deforestation, forest degradation and fossil fuels. A "viewpoint" paper published on 4 February 2025 in the journal *BioScience* by Cássio Pereira, Domingos Rodrigues, Rodolfo Salm, and Philip Fearnside calls attention to three major projects that show the inconsistency between official green discourse the direction of government action. The planned reconstruction of the BR-319 (Manaus-Porto Velho) highway, together with planned side roads, would open a vast area of Amazon forest to deforestation. The planned FerroGrão railway would, in addition to its direct impacts, stimulate the expansion of soybeans and consequent displacement and expansion of cattle ranching. Plans for opening new oil and gas fields and expanding existing ones, both in the Amazon forest and in Brazil's coastal waters, including the extremely risky plan for drilling in the mouth of the Amazon River imply the intention to continue the use of fossil fuels far beyond the time when this must stop to avert catastrophic climate impacts. Other plans with major impacts include the intention of the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA) to legalize land claims in "undesignated" land, a practice that is a major driver of Brazil's Amazon deforestation and that would be especially damaging in the area to be opened via the BR-319 highway. Deforesting the area in question puts important ecosystem services at risk, including maintaining the enormous carbon store in the Amazon forest and in the soil under the forest. Also at risk is the supply of water vapor to the winds known as "flying rivers" that maintain rainfall in the southern and southeastern regions of the country, including cities such as São Paulo. The greenhouse gas emissions from the various planned projects could be critical in pushing the climate system past a tipping point beyond which global warming escapes from human control, and Brazil would be one of the most-devastated countries if this were to occur.

Reference

Pereira, C.C., D.J. Rodrigues, R.A. Salm & P.M. Fearnside. 2025. Amazon projects pose risks to Brazil and the World. *BioScience* <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biaf002>