



Ecocide Law

for an Economy within Planetary Boundaries

THE LAW FOR NATURE

Law can help shift the economy to within planetary boundaries. Voluntary and semi-binding agreements and standards are not enough. Something more is needed.

Making wanton and illegal acts of mass damage and destruction of nature - ecocide - a crime before the International Criminal Court in The Hague holds the promise to:

1. Provide international protection for Earth's living systems on which we and the world economy depend.

2. Stop the harm before it happens, by making the worst illegal and wanton acts very risky for the decision-makers.

3. Level the playing field for business, improving conditions for more sustainable options.

Ecocide Law provides the motivation and support to cease the most harmful ventures, redirecting financial flows and activities. This will improve business conditions for circular and regenerative operations.

Based on the report "Ecocide Law for an Economy within Planetary Boundaries. How Ecocide Law corrects a fundamental flaw in our global economy and protects people and planet."
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THE REPORT:



Ukraine is calling for this law. On March 29th, 2023 the EU Parliament announced its support for including ecocide into the EU revised environmental crimes directive. This makes it all the more urgent to make ecocide a crime before the International Criminal Court as well, for a globally level playing-field. The Parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe has already called for recognition of ecocide as a crime. Investor networks such as the International Corporate Governance Network are suggesting that ecocide should be made a crime.

For more recent developments, visit <https://www.stopecocide.earth/press-releases>.

BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

The proposed new international crime of ecocide describes the most serious acts of environmental destruction. An independent panel of experts in international law has produced a definition of ecocide for inclusion in the Statute of the International Criminal Court, alongside genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression. As an international crime, ecocide could be prosecuted anywhere, and would not be dependent on national law or domestic political will. In addition, as environmental damage can have cross-border and even global impacts, it makes sense to address it on the international level. International crimes are acts with such severe consequences that they are of concern to humanity as a whole. Making ecocide a crime would enable the legal system to hold top decision makers personally accountable.

THE EXPERT PANEL PROPOSED DEFINITION OF ECOCIDE

1. **For the purpose of this statute, “ecocide” means unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts.**
2. **For the purpose of paragraph 1:**
 - a. **“Wanton”** means with reckless disregard for damage which would be clearly excessive in relation to the social and economic benefits anticipated;
 - b. **“Severe”** means damage which involves very serious adverse changes, disruption or harm to any element of the environment, including grave impacts on human life or natural, cultural or economic resources;
 - c. **“Widespread”** means damage which extends beyond a limited geographic area, crosses state boundaries, or is suffered by an entire ecosystem or species or a large number of human beings;
 - d. **“Long-term”** means damage which is irreversible or which cannot be redressed through natural recovery within a reasonable period of time;
 - e. **“Environment”** means the earth, its biosphere, cryosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere, as well as outer space.



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