

[Fechar Janela](#)**ID do Resumo:** 729**THE PROPOSED RECONSTRUCTION OF THE BR-319 (MANAUS-PORTO VELHO) HIGHWAY AS A THREAT TO SUSTAINABILITY IN AMAZONIA**

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Reconstruction of the BR-319 represents a critical decision for the future of the western half of Brazil's Amazon region. Rational decision making regarding any development project requires a just evaluation of both the impacts and the benefits of the project, and these must be compared with equivalent information on other options, including the no-project option. In the case of a highway, the impacts are not restricted to the roadbed itself, or even to the area directly accessed by the road. Together with the highway, a series of planned side roads would open vast new areas in the block of intact forest that now occupies the western part of the state of Amazonas. Migration along the new highway would bring the actors and the processes of the Arc of Deforestation to the central Amazon and on to Roraima. These impacts must be compared with other options for transporting the products of the factories in the Manaus Free Trade Zone (SUFRAMA) to markets in S?o Paulo. These include coastal shipping transporting containers to the port of Santos in the state of S?o Paulo, a railway from Manaus to Humait? proposed by the Amazonas state government, and the continuation of the current system of transporting truck trailers by barge to Bel?m or Porto Velho, after which the journey is completed on the existing highways. A simulation of the process of deforestation in the BR-319 area indicates rapid clearing of forests outside of protected areas. This shows the effect of the reserves in slowing deforestation and their benefits in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. The environmental impact of the highway and the corresponding benefit of avoiding these impacts provide the rationale for adopting alternative means of development. The case of the BR-319 is particularly dramatic, not only because of the impact of opening approximately half of Amazonia to deforestation, but also because the alternative of coastal shipping could fulfill the proposed highway's purpose, and at much lower monetary cost, without the highway's environmental impact.

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