



Washington, November 12, 2012

Honorable Ambassador Gary Doer
Embassy of Canada to the United States of America
501 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Sir:

In solidarity with our international allies affected by metallic mining, we are writing to express our deep concern about the role of Vancouver-based Pacific Rim Mining Corp. in El Salvador. Given the severe environment and human rights implications associated with Pacific Rim's investment in El Salvador and the gold mine and cyanide leach-water processing plant it is proposing, we urge the Canadian government to alert Pacific Rim that its investor-state claim against the Salvadoran government for enforcing its own environmental laws and striving to protect its water and communities tarnishes the image of the Canadian mining industry.

We have been following the case of Pacific Rim closely, and are troubled that the case is proceeding under the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). While it is yet to be seen how ICSID will eventually rule on the merits of Pacific Rim's extreme claim, at stake is whether El Salvador will be ordered by an unaccountable tribunal to pay damages to a mining firm that does not want to comply with El Salvador's policies. The insistence of the company in standing against communities in El Salvador and forcing the Salvadoran government to spend millions defending against this lawsuit serves as a symbol of global capital run amok.

Though there is always danger from the mining and processing necessary to extract gold, Pacific Rim's activity in El Salvador is particularly inexcusable. El Salvador is the second most water-starved country in our hemisphere. Already, 98% of El Salvador's surface water is contaminated, some of it from mining activity halted decades ago. Yet Pacific Rim stands to exacerbate El Salvador's water problems, threatening water quality and quantity particularly for communities living near its project in northern El Salvador.

There is a broad consensus in the department of Cabañas and throughout the country that opening a mine in the Lempa River watershed presents a dangerous risk that El Salvador can ill afford. The Lempa River supplies more than 60% of the nation's water. The threats that Pacific Rim's proposed cyanide-leach processing regime pose to Cabañas' water alone is enough to raise extraordinary alarm.

In addition to the environmental concerns associated with Pacific Rim's project, there are also severe human costs. We are deeply troubled by the human rights abuses associated with the Pacific Rim mine. Already, four environmental activists have been assassinated and many more have been threatened, including journalists who operate a local radio station.

There is a growing global movement committed to stopping Pacific Rim from continuing its lawsuit to extract millions from the taxpayers of El Salvador for not receiving a mining permit after the company failed to complete the required environmental steps under Salvadoran law. We are committed to do all we can to grow opposition to this venture.

Pacific Rim's continued efforts to bully the citizens and government of El Salvador, and to risk irreparable harm to the Salvadoran environment reflects poorly on Canada, its business community and its foreign ventures. We would appreciate a response from you on this matter and to continue this conversation.

Signed,

Center for International and Environmental Law
Earthworks
Earth Island Institute Marine Mammal Project
Foundation Earth
Friends of the Earth
Greenpeace USA
Institute for Policy Studies, Global Economy Project
Public Citizen
Sierra Club

cc. The Honorable Diane Ablonczy, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs)
cc. The Honorable John Baird, Minister of Foreign Affairs
cc. The Honorable Ed Fast, Minister of International Trade
cc. The Honorable Thomas Mulcair, Leader, New Democratic Party of Canada
cc. The Honorable Bob Rae, Leader, Liberal Part of Canada (Acting)
cc. MP Elizabeth May, Leader, Green Party of Canada
cc. Daniel Paillé, Président, Bloc Québécois