

Nov. 6, 2020

Peter Milburn
Chair of the Board of Directors
British Columbia Investment Management Corporation

Directors of the Board
British Columbia Investment Management Corporation

Ref: BCI engagement with Equinox Gold over Los Filos mine in Mexico

Dear Mr. Milburn and Directors and Trustees of the Board,

The undersigned organizations write with deep concern for the risks to health and safety of the community of Carrizalillo in Guerrero, Mexico on whose land Equinox Gold's flagship Los Filos gold mine operates.

The British Columbia Investment Management Corporation (BCI) holds shares in Equinox Gold, which we wish to inform you has failed to uphold the social cooperation agreement with Carrizalillo since it acquiring the Los Filos mine from Leagold in March, 2020. In this short period of time, Equinox has breached key provisions in the agreement related to issues such as the provision of clean water, medication, educational scholarships, jobs and contracts for equipment and machinery, among others, as well as having responded with discriminatory and racist treatment to community efforts to resolve these matters through dialogue.

After three months of seeking dialogue to resolve these issues, the community assembly of Carrizalillo exercised its right, as laid out in this same agreement, to peacefully shut down operations at the mine starting on September 3, 2020. Now, after over sixty days of keeping the mine shut down, the community continues to demand respect from Equinox and a process of negotiations over a new agreement that would guarantee that such breaches would not happen again. The company, instead of addressing the community's requests, has been trying hard to discredit Carrizalillo at the state and federal levels, which heightens the risks the community already faces.

We do not understand why, instead of engaging promptly and in good faith, the company decided to adopt a dilatory, discriminatory and abusive stance, including to criminalize the community's actions. On September 4, the company issued a public statement calling the community encampment an "illegal road blockade". This and other actions based on lies that Mexican authorities have not accepted, and put community members at grave risk of legal persecution and violence, which is all too common at mine sites in Mexico.

Carrizalillo depends on having a strong social cooperation agreement to alleviate - albeit minimally - the grave impacts they have experienced on their sources of water that have been used up or contaminated

since the Los Filos mine went into operation in 2008. The little water now available to them is contaminated with arsenic and is not apt for human use. This means that everyday people bathe with water laced with arsenic and other heavy metals that harm their health and put them at constant risk, as well as implying an excessive annual cost of up to 100,000 pesos or \$6,300 CAD per family for bottled water.

This conflict that has been ongoing for over 60 days could have been quickly resolved and never should have escalated to where it is today, considering that it all started because the company did not want to follow through on signed agreements. Recently, the company added more fuel to the fire by entering into confrontation with both union locals at the mine, as well as contractors, to whom it has sent notices suspending contractual arrangements.

We are aware that BCI has explicitly committed to “to directly engage with companies in constructive dialogue to encourage improvements, depending on our level of control and influence, where we identify an ESG risk that should be managed.” In light of this, we call on BCI to engage in dialogue with Equinox Gold concerning these harms and threats so that it will correct this situation in a prompt and respectful way with the community of Carrizalillo.

Specifically, we echo the requests of the Ejido of Carrizalillo and ask BCI to urge Equinox to:

- Engage in respectful and serious talks over a new social-cooperation agreement that could mitigate harms on the community’s water, health, work and safety.
- To abstain from any further acts of criminalization, discrimination, racism and abuse of its economic and political influence.

As Canadian, Mexican and other international organizations, some of whose pensions are managed by the BCI, we hope that you will take swift action in order to avoid any further harm to a community that has already suffered so much. In addition to the serious concerns for community safety, health and economic well-being, Equinox is creating unnecessary risk for its shareholders by prolonging the suspension of its flagship mine.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter, we look forward to your response.

Attentively,

CANADA

Atlantic Regional Solidarity Network
Blue Planet Project
British Columbia General Employees Union (BCGEU)
Committee for Human Rights in Latin America (CDHAL)
Common Frontiers
The Friends of the Stikine Society, B.C.
Mining Injustice Solidarity Network (MISN)
Mining Justice Action Committee (MJAC), Victoria
Mining Justice Alliance, Vancouver, BC
MiningWatch Canada
Public Service Alliance of Canada, BC Region
Projet Accompagnement Québec-Guatemala
Romero House

Students for Mining Justice, UBC
UBC Environmental Law Group
Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs
Wildsight, BC

INTERNATIONAL

Academia Mexicana de Derecho Ambiental A. C, Mexico
Acción Colectiva Socioambiental, Mexico
Alianza Sierra Madre A.C, Mexico
Articulación Yucatán, México
Asociación Cultural Q'anil, Guatemala
Asociación por la Protección de la Tierra y el Bienestar de Epazoyucan A.C. (APTyBE), Mexico
Bios Iguana, México
CATAPA vzw, Belgium
Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (COPINH), Honduras
Consejo de los Pueblos Wuxhtaj, Guatemala
Consultoría Técnica Comunitaria A.C, Mexico
Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña "Tlachinollan", Mexico
Colectivo CASA, Bolivia
Colectivo GeoComunes, Mexico
Comite Ixtepecano en Defensa de la Vida y el Territorio, México, Mexico
CooperAcción, Peru
Fundación EcuMénica Para El Desarrollo Y La Paz - FEDEPAZ, Peru
The Gaia Foundation
Grupo Territorio Género y Extractivismo (TGE), Mexico
Igapo Project, France
Institute for Policy Studies - Global Economy Program, United States
Justiça nos Trilhos, Brazil
Movimiento Mesoamericano contra el Modelo extractivo Minero (M4)
Movimiento Morelense contra las Concesiones de Minería a Tajo Abierto por Metales, Mexico
Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA), United States
Otros Mundos Chiapas, Mexico
Project on Organizing, Development, Education, and Research (PODER), Mexico
Procesos Integrales para la Autogestión de los Pueblos, Mexico
Red Genero y Medio Ambiente, Mexico
Red Latinoamericana de Mujeres Defensoras de Derechos Sociales y Ambientales
Red Mexicana de Afectadas/os por la Minería (REMA), Mexico
Salva la Selva, Germany
TerraJusta, Bolivia

cc/

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