

**Defend Them All Foundation • MiningWatch Canada • Center for Biological Diversity
• EarthWorks • YASunidos • CATCA Environmental and Wildlife Society •
International Primate Protection League**

Candice McGibbon
Director & Chief Executive Officer
INV Metals Inc.
55 University Avenue Suite 700
Toronto, Ontario M5J 2H7

July 27, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Re: Ecological risks and community opposition around Loma Larga Project at Kimsacocha.

To Mrs. Candice McGibbon, and the Executives, Board of Directors, and Shareholders of INV Metals:

Thank you for your response. With respect, given the known magnitude of risk associated with the Loma Larga Project, and the undeniable, persistent opposition expressed by those who will be directly affected, it is difficult to understand how INV Metals can claim it believes in "responsible mineral development," or that it has worked *with* local and regional communities. The Loma Larga project and the process undertaken by INV Metals over the past decade is inconsistent with these values and the wishes of these communities.

INV Metals was well aware of the local community's opposition to mining in the region when it acquired the property in 2012. In fact, at the time, Indigenous leader Yaku (Carlos) Perez, now president of the Azuay province, [stated](#):

"Regardless of the economic terms that the Ecuadorian government proposed for large scale mining projects in our country, IAMGOLD's problems at the community level are much more serious... This company has not obtained the consent of affected communities to carry out this project, because we recognize that our sources of water are going to be irreparably affected if mining takes place in this area."

This statement, and a long history of objections to the Loma Larga project were [downplayed by INV Metals](#) and have consistently been ignored ever since.

As a reminder of the communities' desire to protect their land, water, and wildlife from metal mining and this project in particular, below are some of the formal steps that local and regional citizens have taken to express this position:

- September 2011 – Resolution of the Cantonal Council of Cuenca declared Cuenca a mining-free territory.
- October 2011 – Community members of Victoria del Portete and Tarqui participated in a local plebiscite in which [92.38% voted against mining in the area of Kimsacocha](#).

- December 2011 – Resolution of the Citizens Parliament of Azuay rejected mining in watersheds and water sources and demanded popular consultation.
- February 2012 – Resolution of the Citizens Parliament of Azuay *again* rejected mining in watersheds and water sources and demanded popular consultation.
- April 2012 – Community leaders in Girón submitted a request for official forms with which to collect signatures to undertake a community plebiscite to decide the future of the mining project. Forms were finally provided in January 2015.
- July 2015 – National Electoral Council approved over 2000 signatures collected in Girón calling for an official referendum on mining at Kimsacochoa.
- August 2016 – Residents of Cuenca and surrounding communities submitted [formal letter](#) and [technical report to](#) the federal and provincial government officials expressing profound concern over the future integrity of the páramo ecosystem surrounding the city given the proposed mining activities.
- October 2016 – The Provincial government of Azuay [unanimously resolved a prohibition on mining](#) in the high-altitude páramo wetlands as well as water sources and fragile ecosystems under threat in the province. The resolution also directed local and national authorities to immediately take action to revoke authorizations that have been granted for mining activities.
- January 2017 – The Council of the County of Cuenca declared its territory, its fragile ecosystems, and its water free of metal mining.
- July 2018 – Citizen Assemblies in Defense of Water and the Paramos passed a resolution rejecting mining in water sources of canton Cuenca and demanded popular consultation.
- December 2018 – In response to numerous complaints by local social organizations, the State Controller General investigated several mining concessions including Loma Larga and issued a [report](#) detailing violations of human rights and the rights of nature pursuant to the Ecuadorian Constitution. According to the report, the mining activities in the protected biological Corridor of the Kimsacochoa Natural Recreation Area were illegally issued.
- February 2019 – Ecuador Decides, a network of local Indigenous, neighborhood, environmentalists, youth, women, and cultural organizations submitted a [letter](#) to the Ecuadorian State Attorney General expressing their concerns over democratic rights of the population of Girón following [INV Metal's threat](#) to initiate an international arbitration against the Ecuadorian State.
- March 2019 – An overwhelming majority (87%) of residents of the Girón Canton [voted "NO"](#) in a cantonal referendum, to the question "*Are you in favour that metal mining occur in the paramos hydrological system in Kimsakocha?*", where the company's mine is located. As a result INV reacted by moving installations to neighboring Cuenca canton.
- March 2019 - Carlos (Yaku) Pérez, an indigenous organization leader known for speaking out against mining in the region, was elected prefect of the Azuay Province (province which encompasses the Loma Larga project) after campaigning as a "defender of water."
- May 2019 – Citizen Assemblies in Defense of Water and the Paramos passed a resolution rejecting mining in water sources of canton Cuenca and demanded popular consultation.
- July 2020 – Citizens of Cuenca submit an Open Letter to the Mayor of Cuenca urging the rejection of any further permits requested by INV Metals.

- July 2020 – Cabildo por el Agua de Cuenca presented a [project of popular consultation](#) on metallic mining in the water recharge areas of the Tarqui and Yanuncay rivers to the mayor of Cuenca, Pedro Palacios, and the Cantonal Council.

As INV Metals is aware, multiple experts have warned against the project due to the complex hydrology of the project site and extremely high risks to the páramo ecosystem and surrounding communities. Based on the 2019 Feasibility Study, the water discharged from the water treatment plant will exceed “the Ecuadorian Freshwater Aquatic Life and Wildlife Standards (Freshwater Standards) for some solutes including aluminum, copper, nitrate, lead, arsenic, chromium, iron, mercury, manganese, and zinc.”¹ The Feasibility Study also noted that all waste rock will be acid-generating, heightening the risk for acid-mine drainage in the long-term.

We continue to stand behind local communities in their efforts to defend the biodiversity and hydrological richness of the Kimsacocha watershed. The longstanding historical opposition to the Loma Larga project has made the desires of these communities abundantly clear. That said, we are not interested in dialogue with INV Metals, but write only to urge the company to cease its operations accordingly.

Sincerely,

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¹ INV Metals, “Feasibility Study Technical Report: Loma Larga Project”, (January 2019) p. 305.