

May 3, 2006

The Honourable Peter MacKay,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
House of Commons, Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. MacKay:

We write to bring to your urgent attention an escalating conflict between Ecuadorian communities and a Canadian junior mining company, Ascendant Copper, and to ask for your support in ensuring a peaceful resolution that is respectful of the communities' decisions.

Local communities in the Intag region of Ecuador took an important democratic step in proclaiming their area an "ecological county" in which they choose sustainable development and rejected mining. Their area is one of the world's ten most threatened biodiversity hotspots. To understand the ecological and community assets at risk, we present you with a new film, *The Curse of Copper*. It documents the ongoing efforts of the communities to enforce their ecological ordinance against the encroachment of open pit copper mining in Junin, Ecuador.

Friends of the Earth and Mining Watch Canada brought this matter to your predecessors' attention with unsatisfactory results. We now request your urgent attention to a matter which can only damage Canada's reputation without your careful intervention

Today, we release to you recent correspondence between the communities and the Minister of Energy and Mining of Ecuador and also between the Municipality of Cotacachi and Comptroller-General of the Nation and the Minister of the Environment which underline serious irregularities surrounding Ascendant's proposed open pit copper mine. In our opinion, it is clear that in cases such as Junin, Canadian mining companies require unequivocal direction in order to comply with international human rights standards and to ensure compliance with laws such as the important ecological ordinance.

Minister MacKay and Minister Emerson, we are participating with your officials in the roundtable process currently in development to discuss regulatory mechanisms that would provide explicit guarantees to communities around the world that Canadian mining companies can and will be required to respect Canadian values for both human rights and the environment. Unfortunately, the situation in Ecuador cannot await the results of these roundtable discussions. Your urgent attention is needed today.

We are available to brief you on this matter at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully,