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Mining/Energy | 18 April, 2008 [14:30]

Peru Smelter Loses Environmental Certification

One of the largest metal smelters in the hemisphere lost its environmental certification in a highly unusual move taken by the company's third-party auditors.



The March 11 decision revokes certification granted two years ago to Doe Run Peru, an affiliate of the New York City-based RencoGroup, a private holding company owned primarily by U.S. billionaire Ira Rennert.

TUV Rheinland cited non-compliance with Peruvian environmental laws and the lack of adequate pollution controls as its rationale for revoking certification, according to OK International, Earthjustice and AIDA, non-profit groups that work to protect public health from industrial pollutants and to provide legal aid in environmental cases, often dealing with the extraction of natural resources.

A number of studies conducted by the government, as well as international health experts, have shown that almost all of the children living in the area surrounding Doe Run's smelter have high levels of lead in their bodies.

Many are severely exposed and require immediate medical treatment, according to a press release issued by OK International, Earthjustice and AIDA last week.

The decertification hit just as Doe Run Peru's employees began to strike.

More than one thousand workers from Doe Run Peru marched through the streets of Lima today. According to local NGO's they are asking for greater profit-sharing and increased corporate financial transparency.

A coalition of Peruvian religious leaders and grass roots activists are pushing the company to protect La Oroya's residents and its environment for moral and ethical reasons. It also seeks greater financial openness since profits may be used to complete the necessary environmental improvements.

"The care for life and the environment is of unavoidable urgency for every person and community. Humanity has been entrusted with the environment, which is an inheritance given by God as a common home that we should care for and protect," said Monsignor Pedro Barreto, Archbishop of Huancayo and president of the Regional Roundtable of Junin, which is pressing the company to comply with environmental standards

The Peruvian government granted the company an additional three-and-one-half-year extension to fulfill the obligations of its ten year-old environmental operations agreement.

Barreto was part of a high-ranking Peruvian religious delegation that traveled to the United States last June to urge Rennert to install pollution controls on moral and ethical grounds. The Renco Group and former plant operators, Doe Run, St. Louis, refused to

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meet with the delegation, referring them to Doe Run Peru.

Rennert is chairman of the Fifth Avenue Synagogue in New York City, a modern Orthodox congregation.

"Revoking the certification should send a strong message to Doe Run that they have much more work to do," said Anna Cederstav, staff scientist with AIDA and Earthjustice and author of the book, La Oroya Cannot Wait. "Nevertheless, we are still concerned that, if paid enough, another certifying body will agree to provide Doe Run with a similar certification."

When Doe Run Peru obtained environmental certification in 2006 by TUV Rheinland, it called the document an "internationally recognized symbol of a company's dedication to superior quality, customer satisfaction and continuous improvement" on its website.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States has requested that the Peruvian government implement urgent measures to halt violations against the health of the citizens of La Oroya.

Elias Szczytnicki, regional director of Religions for Peace in Lima, said the religious community's efforts to bring the company into environmental compliance is not aimed at hurting profits, but of improving operations. "This is not good news," he said of the decertification. "This is bad news for us. Our interest is not to hurt the business. This news demonstrates that the health of the people continues running a great risk.

"The ideal news would be that the company receives several environmental certificates so that the people could live healthy lives."

Joining Hands Peru



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26 Comments

[3rd Deadliest Air is LIMA](#) says :
18 April, 2008 [15:43]

Are you freaking kidding me? Its 300 Miles away!!! Where are those agencies in Lima? Id like one of them to stick an air test anywhere in Lima.... Finding that Lima is the the third Deadliest in Air Pollution in the WORLD. Why?? NO Vehicle emmissions..... They tried to enforce vehicle emission but it wont stick.... WHY????? BECAUSE its a Mafia who controls the car imports, they disconnect the Catyliconverter (<--spelling?) and melt the High grade of minerals out of it, then turning this melted metal into Jewlry that you buy in Larcomar.....

So next time you buy a platnium bracetl, just think of a prettly little yellow Tiko Taxi that you bracetl was made from....

This is why the air is so freaking dirtyly in this city..... Not from the IRON plant 300 miles away from the city of Lima!!!!!!

[Michael](#) says :
18 April, 2008 [16:01]

I know someone to ask, but I'm pretty sure the winds don't go from La Oroya to Lima anyway.....

[Anonymous Dave](#) says :
18 April, 2008 [16:54]

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Last comments

In [Chile's former Miss Universe requests Peru's "original pisco sour"](#)

David says :
30 April, 2008 08:56:46
Just to play devil's advocate for a minute. Hyundai better gas milage, better as I can keep an e ...

In [Chile's former Miss Universe requests Peru's "original pisco sour"](#)

Lopez De Castilla says :
30 April, 2008 07:38:46
Im pretty dissapointed that either of those two won.I voted for Alan Garcia, because he was the less ...

In [Chile's former Miss Universe requests Peru's "original pisco sour"](#)

Michael says :
30 April, 2008 07:14:47
Juan, I don't know what election you were watching. Alan won 53/47 - which isn't " ...

In [Chile's former Miss Universe requests Peru's "original pisco sour"](#)

wizzardsway says :
30 April, 2008 06:09:36
tried both, peru's the best

In [Stable Economy Pushes Real Estate Prices Up in Peru](#)

Cecilia Z. says :
30 April, 2008 04:24:20
if you want to buy real estate in Peru I would wait until the big stock market crash later this year ...

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