

Declaration of Environmental Social and Cultural Group *Putando Resiste*

August 27, 2020

Valparaíso Court Nullifies Illegal Authorization of Vizcachitas Mining Company Drilling Project

In a historic ruling, the Valparaíso Court of Justice has nullified the illegal authorization of the “Prefeasibility Mining Drilling for Las Tejas” project and has ordered the Regional Environmental Assessment Service (SEA in Spanish) to implement a process of citizen participation for the Vizcachitas holding company’s environmental evaluation.

On August 27, the Valparaíso Court of Appeals approved an injunction requested by the Putaendo community against the SEA, which, in March of this year, denied the opening of a citizen participation process requested by more than 2,000 people and social organizations. In an expedited process, and in the midst of a pandemic, the SEA then granted an Environmental Qualification Resolution (RCA in Spanish) approving the environmental impact statement (EIS) for the “*Prefeasibility Mining Drilling for Las Tejas*” project and granting the Canadian transnational mining company, Cía. Minera Vizcachitas Holding, the right to commence a new drilling campaign of 350 holes in the Las Tejas Sector of the foothills of our valley.

In this regard, and as a community organization in Putaendo, we emphasize the following:

1) Justice was served. The Fourth Chamber of the Valparaíso Court of Appeals, in a unanimous and forceful ruling, nullified the illegal resolution, nullified the favorable RCA and forced the evaluation process backwards so that the citizen participation procedure, requested by the inhabitants of the area, is duly implemented.

With this historic ruling, the Court of Appeals has heard our claim and puts things in their proper place. It has applied justice and has also applied environmental principles and regulations correctly and with common sense. This is in stark contrast to the capricious and restrictive interpretation that the SEA systematically applies in terms of not granting Citizen Participation to the communities that request it in a timely fashion.

2) We demand that the SEA comply immediately, without delay, as ordered by the Court. In particular, we demand that the project’s RCA be annulled, and that no appeal be made to the Supreme Court, since this will only produce an immense expenditure of resources and energy that we ultimately end up paying with our taxes. We also demand that the SEA carefully fulfill the instructions of the Court to open a true Citizen Participation process, where the community of Putaendo is listened to and all of its observations and objections to the nefarious mining project are addressed.

3) This triumph belongs to the entire Putaendo community. It belongs to all of its organizations and the neighbours who have marched, protested, and denounced the danger that looms over our valley. We reiterate our commitment to continue defending ourselves from mining intervention in our beautiful and vital mountain range. It is there that life is born, and from there it moves down the valley.

We are certain and aware that this important victory is temporary and that the predators will return to continue their harassment. Therefore, we put out a call for everyone to stay alert, united, active and organized.

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