



Protecting Children from Lead Emissions in the Peruvian Andes

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High in the Peruvian Andes, the community of La Oroya is gravely affected by lead, arsenic, and cadmium emissions from a U.S. corporation's polymetallic smelter. Hundreds of children in La Oroya suffer from high blood lead levels.

E-LAW U.S. worked together with partners at the Peruvian Society for Environmental Law and the Civil Association Labor to conduct soil sampling and help the community take steps to make its voice heard and protect public health. The community, health officials, and the company are now working together to develop a plan to reduce emissions and clean up La Oroya.

The Doe-Run Corporation's smelter operation emits more than 1,500 kilograms of lead per day. The smelter opened for business in the 1920s and was purchased by Doe Run from the government of Peru in 1997.

The company is requesting a five-year extension of its current environmental management plan. This would delay air pollution reduction until 2011. Local organizations are asking the Peruvian government not to delay reductions in sulfur dioxide and toxic metal emissions.

Professor Howard Mielke at Xavier University in New Orleans helped E-LAW U.S. scientists design a soil sampling plan for more than 20 locations in La Oroya. Howard is an environmental toxicologist specializing in metal contamination of urban environments. Samples were split in half and analyzed independently at a certified laboratory in Lima and at Xavier University in Louisiana. The



laboratory results painted a bleak picture: Every sample contained lead and arsenic far above safe levels.

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SPDA presented the laboratory findings to Peru's Congress in November 2002. Following that presentation, the Vice Minister of Energy and Mines called for an immediate meeting with SPDA and Doe Run representatives. Since then, community representatives and E-LAW advocates have met with professionals from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. CDC has been asked by the Peruvian Government to propose an action plan to address La Oroya's public health problems.

For more information about this E-LAW Impact, the Peruvian Society for Environmental Law, or the Civil Association Labor, please contact the U.S. office of the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide at elawus@elaw.org.