



Movimiento  
Morelense  
contra las  
Concesiones  
de Minería  
por Metales



## **Federal Secretary of Social Welfare Behaves as Representative of Canadian mining company Alamos Gold in Morelos, Mexico**

October 19, 2019

A few clarifications are in order in response to the recent statement of Hugo Eric Flores, federal delegate for social welfare in the state of Morelos, Mexico concerning the interests to start mining of Canadian mining company Alamos Gold through its local subsidiary Esperanza Silver.

On October 9, Flores stated that he didn't see "any risk from the mine going into operation given the need for economic development in the country," and that "the Secretary of Economy is reviewing the environmental impact permits and ensuring natural resources will be protected."

It seems that the public official is somewhat confused. The office where he gets paid to work as Secretary of State is responsible for social welfare. But rather than promoting social welfare, he seems to think that his job is to promote the welfare of Canadian company Alamos Gold and its extractivist project.

But not only do his statements lack reason, they have nothing to do with his job. He is mistaken about the official institution responsible for applying the Precautionary Principle and evaluating - on the basis of the common good - the viability of megaprojects, which is the Secretary for the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT by its initials in Spanish) not the Secretary of Economy.

The delegate for "social welfare" needs to do his homework before publicly suggesting that in the case of Alamos Gold's mining project that "the environment and natural resources will be protected", while omitting the negative and irreversible consequences of this project that by definition cannot be "sustainable", given how it will lead to:

- Irrational and disproportionate consumption of water in a region with a water shortage, reason for which SEMARNAT denied the environmental impact assessment in 2013 to initiate mineral extraction when it was owned by Esperanza Silver.
- Violation of the Xochicalco archeological area, another reason for which the environmental assessment was turned down. Now, Alamos Gold erroneously believes that by giving up its concessions in the area around the archeological area, it will avoid damaging it.
- Contamination and acidification of aquifers and rivers with heavy metals and with chemicals used in mineral processing.
- Air contamination with dust from mining activities full of heavy metals and that can be transported in micro-particles (PM5 and 2.5) that are highly damaging to people's health.
- Harms to the social fabric of local communities, creating divisions, internal conflicts and uncertainty not only in Tetlama, but in other communities nearby, within and beyond the 15,000 hectares that have been concessioned to the company.

- Harms to agriculture, communities' sacred sites, local flora and fauna in areas of significance for environmental conservation in Morelos, as well as deceptive offers of jobs, given that this is temporary employment in exchange for multiple long term impacts.
- Irreversible health impacts for the population in the region, with greater impact in densely populated urban and suburban areas near the site that the company wishes to mine.
- Emissions that contribute to global warming.
- Ongoing disinformation to manipulate residents, coopt authorities, as well as systematically harass people opposed to the mine leading to increased insecurity.
- Impacts on the landscape and tourist potential, locally and regionally.
- Environmental impacts that will progressively and inevitably involve the metropolitan area of Cuernavaca and other urban areas in the municipalities of Cuernavaca, Temixco, Xochitepec, Emiliano Zapata and Jiutepec.

The public official also repeated the same old deceptive offer of jobs and economic benefits while failing to mention the precarious nature of such employment and how such income gets spent to unsuccessfully treat the illnesses that arise, as can be seen where mines are in operation. Instead of proposing and promoting real, long-term economic alternatives that are suitable to truly ensuring social welfare and, in particular, developed from the population's own projects and not to benefit the external interests of others.

This official and many others should know that it is not necessary to wait for a disaster to take protective action: whatever type of mining technology that may be used, all of the above mentioned impacts are foreseeable, and the idea of so-called "sustainable mining" is not only a myth, but a clear indication of the company's interest to dispossess at the same time that it is evidence of its ignorance and disdain for communities.

In conclusion, the state delegate for the Secretary of Social Welfare seems to be operating as a representative of the company and its interests. Not only does he lack any technical knowledge, but he lacks morals when he makes statements as if he were a public relations officer, or a political and commercial representative for the company. His remarks in favour of a project that would dispossess and forcibly displace people threaten life in all its forms and are unjustifiable from the perspective of the Precautionary Principle, Public Health and the Common Good.

Finally, it is worth suggesting that the public official take some vacation time in the communities of Carrizalillo and Nueva Balsas, Guerrero that have been overtaken by organized crime and become almost deserted by their local population in order to fully enjoy the "sustainable mining" he promotes and ascribes to, breathing a bit of the air, drinking the water and getting sick with cancer.

We hope that he will appreciate the graciousness of our recommendations.

Attentively,

Morelos Movement Against Metallic Mining Concessions

Mexican Network of Mining Affected People (REMA by its initials in Spanish)