

# Community Opposition: The Need To Listen (Newsletter)\*

January 18, 2008

## **From the Santiago Times last October:**

“Opponents of the Pascua Lama gold mine took to the streets of Santiago on Saturday to raise public awareness about the US\$1.4 billion project that, they claim, will have terrible long-term effects on Chile’s environment. Although environmental authorities have already approved the project, protesters said their continued resistance can halt the completion of construction.”

## **From the Resource Investor the same month:**

“The situation at Ascendant Copper in Ecuador might serve as a snapshot of the enormous risks and rewards facing management at mining companies (and their investors) worldwide, but particularly in Ecuador and South America, where the volatile political landscape has shifted towards socialist-populist democratic inspired government action in recent years.

“... the government ... announced the formal suspension of Ascendant’s mining and community development activities in the Junin area in an effort to defuse tensions, ...

“These tensions boiled over in [2006] on Ascendant’s agricultural property. Anti-mining activists confronted a third party contracted agricultural firm’s ... workers and security guards resulting in almost 60 people being held captive by activists, and locked in the local community church for several days until order was restored by Ecuadorian police.”

“Argentina’s Chubut province approved a one-year renewal of the environmental impact statement for drilling at the Navidad silver and lead-mine project, according to a resolution published in the province’s Official Bulletin Tuesday.

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**And from CNN that same month:**

“Yet even after the dispute over ownership is settled, there are also local issues that may hinder development at the mine. Despite the provincial approval of the environmental impact statement, other mine projects have met stiff resistance in the province.”

There is a common thread among these reports that is the same as opposition to mining projects in the US and elsewhere. Local populations feel that they are not sufficiently included in planning and discussions for the proposed project. This is why the concept of a social license has become an important issue for mining company managers and executives. This local acceptance of a mining project needs to include the economic, natural, and societal environments of the proposed mine’s environs, as well as governmental policies at the local, regional, and national levels. A white paper on obtaining a social license to operate a mine is available for free download from <http://www.appl-ecosys.com/publications/social-license.pdf>.

Environmentally and socially responsible mining address the concerns for corporate social responsibility, a term that produces just under 6 million hits on Google.