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In Crucitas, San Carlos

“Setena grants environmental feasibility to the mining project”

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After six months of study, the SETENA announced yesterday that the opencast mining project in Las Crucitas, San Carlos, has the respective environmental feasibility to start operations.

That was announced yesterday by the following environmentalist organizations: Union Norte por la Vida (Unovida) and the Federacion Costarricense para la proteccion del ambiente (Fecon) [Costa Rican Federation for the Protection of the Environment], who had deplored the resolution of the competent authorities since they consider that “the State is giving in to business pressures”

Ever since the Canadian company, Vanessa Ventures, and its subsidiary company in Costa Rica, Industrias Infinito S.A., announced their intention to extract gold in Costa Rica, the opposition of the environmentalist groups has held back the progress of the works

However, it seems that, with Setena’s support, the administrative means came to an end for the environmentalists. Therefore, the only option is to turn to the Constitutional Court “to try to stop the company”, as it was stated by pro environment groups that took it out on authorities.

“In the light of the company’s threats of millionaire lawsuits, the Setena has been giving in and modifying decisions in which some of the interests of the collectivity, such as the policies for the protection of the environment, are at stake”

“Let’s not forget that in March, 2003, the Setena agreed not to grant the environmental feasibility to the Crucitas Mining Project because it considered that the environmental impact study did not fulfill its objectives, based in several legal and technical observations”

“However, a month later, the company stated that it would sue Costa Rica for \$276 millions. Unfortunately, a couple of days ago, the Setena ended up granting the environmental feasibility after a lot of pressure”

The president of the Industrias Infinito company, Erich Rauguth, informed last September that the company was considering the possibility of withdrawing the lawsuit,

after finding out that the Setena had received the respective documents to evaluate the environmental impact study.

The organizations declared that “we will be lodging reversal appeals and appeals since we believe we cannot allow them to continue giving advantages to a company that uses threats and blackmail to achieve their lucrative objectives”