

Elected Officials of Marquette City and County:

Please take a few minutes to check the following information. These articles are from a variety of sources but all say the same thing! This is the company that is now figuring out how to get around the EPA. Please do not support Rio Tinto.

1. Source: <http://londonminingnetwork.org/2010/04/rio-tinto-a-shameful-history-of-human-and-labour-rights-abuses-and-environmental-degradation-around-the-globe/>

This is an excellent summary of Rio Tinto's environmental and human rights record. It will be easier to scan it at the site than reprint it here.

2. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rio_Tinto_Group

Rio Tinto Group, like many other companies in extractive industries, has been widely targeted by environmentalist groups for its mining activities. Opposition to the company focuses on its mining methods due to environmental degradation, the company's coal operations for their contribution to [global warming](#), and uranium operations for environmental and nuclear technology concerns.

Rio Tinto's Grasberg mine in Indonesia has been the focus of environmental concerns. (Photo by Alfindra Primaldhi)

Perhaps the most significant environmental criticism to date has come from the [Government of Norway](#), which divested itself from Rio Tinto shares and banned further investment due to environmental concerns. Claims of severe environmental damages related to Rio Tinto's engagement in the [Grasberg mine](#) in Indonesia led [the Government Pension Fund of Norway](#) to exclude Rio Tinto from its investment portfolio. The fund, which is said to be the world's second-largest pension fund, sold shares in the company valued at [NOK](#) 4.85 billion (US\$ 855 million) to avoid contributing to environmental damages caused by the company.^[63]

Exclusion of a company from the Fund reflects our unwillingness to run an unacceptable risk of contributing to grossly unethical conduct. The Council on Ethics has concluded that Rio Tinto is directly involved, through its participation in the Grasberg mine in Indonesia, in the severe environmental damage caused by that mining operation.^[64]
—[Kristin Halvorsen](#), [Norwegian Minister of Finance](#)

Rio Tinto disputes the claims of environmental damage at the Grasberg mine, and states that the company has long maintained an excellent record on environmental issues.^[65]

63. [^] [Norwegian Ministry of Finance](#) (9 September 2008). "[The Government Pension Fund divests its holdings in mining company](#)".

<http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/fin/Press-Center/Press-releases/2008/the-government-pension-fund-divests-its-.html?id=526030&epslanguage=EN-GB>

64. [^] Mac Alister, Terry (9 September 2008). "[Ethical business: Norway ejects mining giant Rio from its pension portfolio](#)". *The Guardian* (London).

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2008/sep/09/riotinto.ethicalbusiness>. Retrieved 10 September 2008.

65. [^] "[Norway blacklists miner Rio Tinto](#)". *BBC News* (BBC). 10 September 2008.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7608097.stm>. Retrieved 9 April 2009.

3. Source: <http://makewealthhistory.org/2008/09/09/norway-divests-itself-of-mining-giant-rio-tinto/>

Despite the line-up of accusers, the company has reacted with dismay to this national rebuke: "Our immediate response is one of surprise and disappointment. We have an exemplary record in environmental matters, world leading in fact, and they are given the very highest priority in everything we do" according to their London spokesman Nick Cobban.

That the environment is Rio Tinto's "highest priority" is somewhat laughable, but they are highly profitable. As one of our largest companies, they enjoy plenty of privileges from the UK government. All credit to Norway's central bank for their ethical stand. Let's hope others follow their example.

4. Source: <http://www.mining-law-reform.info/EnvironmentalRecord.htm>

Who is Resolution Copper?

Resolution Copper Company, created in 2002, is a foreign-owned subsidiary of Rio Tinto [55% owner] headquartered in the United Kingdom, and BHP (Broken Hill Properties) [45% owner] headquartered in Australia.

Rio Tinto is a leading international mining group, combining Rio Tinto plc, a London listed public company headquartered in the UK, and Rio Tinto Limited, which is listed on the Australian Stock Exchange, with executive offices in Melbourne.

BHP Billiton was formed by a merger between BHP, one of Australia's oldest and largest companies, and Billiton, headquartered in London, with major operations and development projects in Australia, North and South America, and southern Africa.

Rio Tinto subsidiaries include Kennecott, which holds the record for producing the largest sulfate and heavy metal plume in the U. S. — at its Bingham Canyon operations in Salt Lake City, Utah. However, that's not all according to the [Vermont Journal of Environmental Law, May, 2006](#).

A Mining Company's [Kennecott] History and its Legal Implications

Several states, such as Montana, Nevada, South Dakota, and Wisconsin have permit block provisions that either require or authorize permit denial where the applicant has prior violations and bond forfeitures. Kennecott's history of abiding by state and federal laws is checkered with violations. Kennecott has compared the Eagle Project to its Greens Creek Mine, outside Juneau, Alaska—the nation's largest silver producer. The Greens Creek Mine, located within the Admiralty Island National Monument in the Tongass National Forest, has a long list of violations within a multitude of both state and federal laws. Kennecott also owns two copper mines in Utah which are listed on the Superfund's National Priorities List. The "Bingham Canyon mine created a 72-square-mile plume of sulfate contaminated groundwater under the homes of 70,000 Salt Lake area residents. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that full remediation of this groundwater resource would cost around .2 billion."

It is a partner with Freeport-McMoran in West Papua, Indonesia, participating in one of the worst environmental and human rights fiascos of our times.

BHP's lack of environmental responsibility is so serious that even their shareholders are complaining!

[BHP Shareholders for Social Responsibility](#)

5. Source: <http://dte.qn.apc.org/65RIO.HTM>

Down to Earth No. 65 May 2005

Rio Tinto closes Kelian mine - history of human rights abuses

UK-based mining company Rio Tinto closed the Kelian gold mine in East Kalimantan in February this year after 13 years of operation.

The mine was developed on land owned by indigenous Dayak communities who were given no choice but to move. Its history has been punctuated by protests over evictions, violence and

intimidation by security personnel against people who protested, and violence against women as well as environmental pollution.

According to a *Jakarta Post* report, Rio Tinto's mine closure programme includes converting its 6,670-hectare area into a protected forest plus community development programmes through its Anum Lio Foundation (YAL). US\$11 million has been set aside for the forest and \$2.4 million for the YAL programmes.

The community programmes includes training programmes for employees, including farming, fisheries and technical skills. The company will also continue community development programmes conducted through YAL, including a food security programme to boost rice production and a tuberculosis eradication programme in West Kutai district.

Deputy director for external relations, Anang Rizkani Noor, said the company would fill the mine's two 133-hectare pits and 455-ha tailings dam with water, turning them into lakes. The processing plant site will be converted into a wetland to filter the lakes' water and discharge through a natural bioremediation process. He said the company would continue to monitor the water's pollution levels until 2013.

These plans have been criticised by community representatives and by NGOs as inadequate for the long term health and security of local people. A question prepared by DTE for Rio Tinto's annual general meeting in London two years ago remains relevant. It offered the criticism that the artificial lakes and swamp will contain untreated sludges containing cyanides, heavy metals and other toxic substances.

"These could contaminate water supplies and enter the food chain. The euphemistically named 'wet cover' and 'wetlands' methods are still experimental. Their long-term safety has not been proven scientifically. Ground and surface water from these areas eventually drains into local rivers used by thousands of local people. Dams can fail or flood, again releasing polluted water into local rivers. The existing acid rock drainage problem will not be solved solely by covering other waste heaps with soil."

www.minesandcommunities.org/Company/rioagm2003.htm

The local community organisation LKMTL has repeatedly asked Rio Tinto and KEM to take responsibility for the long-term environmental security and protection of the community's health and livelihoods. Their demands include guarantees, independent environmental monitoring and free hospital facilities. LKMTL withdrew from KEM's Mine Closure Committee and Working Groups in 2003, because it felt the committee was only a token gesture and did not take community concerns and solutions seriously. Its representatives were forced to return by PT KEM's management who threatened to withhold payments promised to the community organisation.

Rio Tinto says it has resolved problems relating to environmental destruction and human rights abuses, and has paid compensation of up to Rp49 billion (\$5.4 million) as of 2004 for all claims. PT KEM had previously agreed to pay Rp60 billion during protracted negotiations with the community.

The closure of the Kelian mine does not mean that Rio Tinto will leave Kalimantan. Anang said the company was registering permits for copper and gold surveys in Central and West Kalimantan and for nickel in Central and Southeast Sulawesi.

Rio Tinto also earns 40% of the profits from expanded production at the huge Grasberg gold and copper mine in West Papua - a project which also has a deplorable environmental and human rights record.

(*Jakarta Post* 31/Jan/05. See also [DTE 57](#) for more background on Rio Tinto and Kelian).

With hope for the future!

Eeva Miller