



Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL) - <https://www.ciel.org/>

By Chris Leivesley, HOPE member QLD

By approaching environmental law from a human rights perspective, CIEL has made notable strides towards a sustainable ecology. Fostering future activism, their

Washington and Geneva offices have provided over 400 lawyers and students with hands-on experience crafting environmental policy. Both CIEL and its partners have committed to accelerating their efforts. This follows the 2018 IPCC finding that to avoid irrevocable ecological damage we must curtail our greenhouse emissions by 2030.

Recent Momentum

1. Provided ground-laying strategies to hold investors in fossil fuel conglomerates liable for environmental damage. The endeavor has culminated in over 1000 institutions committing to divest \$9 trillion from fossil fuels.
2. Helped convince 187 countries at Basel Convention to support new law requiring a nation's consent before they can be used as a dumping ground for plastic waste. The amendment protects Southeast Asian countries that had become the unwilling recipients of the world's toxic 'recycled' plastic.
3. Not simply scripting laws but throwing themselves into the thick of environmental activism, CIEL investigated more than 1000 trade permits in Brazil, identifying 34 officials working in collusion with organised tree poaching.



Future Goals

1. Advocate discontinuation of Investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS), a system allowing foreign corporations to sue governments for impeding their projects. CIEL has recently helped Roșia Montană,



Romania, defend against a \$4.4 billion claim after a gold mine was permanently stopped over spurious permits. The environmentalist group is fighting a similar ISDS in Colombia, where a total of \$18 billion worth of ISDS suits are pending. *“When mining companies use ISDS, they challenge not only state sovereignty, but also the few hard-won laws and decisions that allow communities to defend their homes, livelihoods, and human rights”* – CIEL attorney Carla Garcia Zendejas.

2. Adamantly oppose geoengineering as a maneuver by fossil fuel companies to stall progress in ending our fossil fuel addiction. Oil and coal suppliers propose remediating the symptoms of global warming; this would use sulfur dioxide aerosols to reflect solar radiation. CIEL argues that such unproven techniques will waste time and political will. IPCC deadlines to reduce greenhouse emissions are clearly achievable but only by stopping the problem at its source.



CIEL tests the strengths of environmental abusers on the ground, using the lessons and precedents of their skirmishes to oppose resource extraction corporations globally. Cooperation between world-scale focused groups such as CIEL and Australian groups such as Householders' Options to Protect the Environment (HOPE) is needed to translate environmentalist principles into practice.

References

<https://www.ciel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/CIEL-2019-Impact-Report-Page-View.pdf>

<https://isds.bilaterals.org/?new-report-exposes-mining>

<https://storage.googleapis.com/planet4-mexico-stateless/2019/07/cf5d6755-gp0stsx6e.jpg>

<https://www.geoengineeringwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/33.png>