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Dear Colleague:

This is the first in a series of letters regarding the plight of working families who live in Ecuador's oil-producing Amazon Rainforest. In 1993, 76 residents of the area who lived near the wells sued Texaco (now Chevron). The residents represent 30,000 Ecuadorians impacted by Texaco's actions.

Texaco began its oil operations roughly 40 years ago in a once pristine region of the Amazon rainforest. Today, this region, the size of Rhode Island, struggles to deal with an environmental and humanitarian crisis. More than 1,400 residents have died from cancer, birth defects are prevalent, and the region suffers from water contamination, rainforest deforestation, and ecosystem degradation. While these horrors continue to unfold and the inhabitants of the region still drink and bathe in polluted water, the case lingers on without resolution.

There are innumerable stories I could share from the 230,000 people who live along the oil fields in northern Ecuador. Pools of thick oil dot the landscape. Water tests of one local farmer's land revealed oil contamination at 20,000 percent above safe water consumption levels. Too many children have cancer and, as a result, too many parents have to experience the ultimate heartbreak—the death of a child.

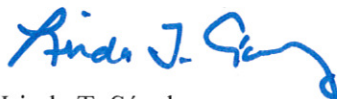
After the original suit was dismissed from U.S. court (Texaco had successfully argued that Ecuador was the proper forum), the case was refiled in Ecuador seeking damages for the clean up and catastrophic illnesses suffered. Experts have estimated that damages in this case could be as high as \$27 billion.

Unfortunately, the people of Ecuador still wait for justice. In 2001, when Chevron acquired Texaco for \$45.8 billion, it also acquired legal responsibility for any and all of Texaco's misdeeds. Even though Chevron had full knowledge of the ongoing human and environmental tragedy in Ecuador when it acquired Chevron, it refused to clean up its mess and make its victims whole.

Instead, Chevron vowed: "we're not paying and we're going to fight this for years if not decades into the future," and has begun a quiet lobbying effort that seeks to punish Ecuador by taking away its trade preferences. This misguided approach will not solve the problem but only further punish an already impoverished nation.

I thank you for your consideration of this issue and look forward to discussing it with you further in the days to come.

Regards,



Linda T. Sánchez