



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY
SINKOR 4TH STREET, MONROVIA LIBERIA



**STAKEHOLDERS' CONSULTATION IN FAVOR OF WESTERN CLUSTED LIBERIA LTD
FOR THE EXPLOITATION AND PROCESSING OF IRON ORE FROM THE BOMI HILLS
MINE, TUBMANBURG, BOMI COUNTY .**

**HELD ON THE FORESTRY TRAINING INSTITUTE CAMPUS IN TUBMANBURG CITY ,
ON JULY 24, 2025.**



INTRODUCTION

In fulfillment of the ESIA process which provides a road map to the measures needed to prevent and mitigate negative environmental and social impacts, a one day stakeholders' consultation was held in Tubmanburg city, Bomi county on Thursday July 24, 2025 at 8:00am. The consultative meeting brought together Citizens and officials of the Affected communities, Line Ministries Agencies and commissions of Government, the local county authority represented by the Superintendent, district #1 lawmaker and others, delegates of Western Cluster Liberia Limited and a host of Liberians.

Welcome Remarks

Madam Frances Brown Seydou, Director of the department of Inter-Sectoral coordination commenced the meeting by recognizing all participants from various sectors and apologized for the delay due to the ill weather condition and deployable road condition

The Mayor of the city of Tubmanburg, Mohammed A. Sheriff welcomed everyone and expressed gratitude to all participants for adhering to the invitation of the meeting despite other tight scheduled. He further recognized the presence of all stakeholders including the project proponent, Western Cluster Liberia Limited.

Madam Miatta E. Dorley, Superintendent, Bomi County, welcomed all parties in attendance to Bomi County and appreciated the EPA for organizing the meeting. The superintendent further lamented on the occurrence of other impactful environmental issues excluding the famous Western Cluster operations. She highlighted the deployable road from Tubmanburg to Duala as an impediment to growth in the county and the operation of other companies (Kongo Mining, Bea Mountain and Madina Rock) in the county with huge environmental impacts.

Special Statements

1. **Mr. Titus F. Nabieu**, Proxies for Hon. Johkpakpa O. Varney, appreciated all participants, particularly Western Cluster and its consultant MAC-Africa for the initiative to bring stakeholders together for the so purpose of making their intention known to the government and the project affected communities and other citizens of Bomi County and Liberia at large. According to Mr. Nabieu, consultation like this was not done around 2019, but citizens were knocking on the doors of the local authority and County Legislative body to highlight some of the environmental issues as a result of the company's operations. He also appealed to Western Cluster to be opened and truthful in everything about their

operational documents. Urging participants to be ambassadors and spread the message from the meeting as he concluded.

2. **Dr. Jerry Toe**, Consultant within the ERRS Department, appreciated the local authority for welcoming the decision to host the meeting. He enlightened the audience on the function of the Agency **and** told them that EPA give permits to companies in Liberia but all Liberians together to ensure that things are right. Dr. Toe also acknowledged the audience that the permits that EPA gives have conditions which have to do with the dos and don'ts that must be met by the company. Dr. Toe told residents that their concerns or information are highly crucial to the permit that will be issued to Western Cluster Limited, Liberia. He said the Stakeholder Consultation is all about bringing together project affected communities, project proponent and the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA as the regulatory body to review the project document and identify some impacts associated with the project. Madam Frances Brown Seydou, Director Inter-Sectoral coordination recognized the presence of all project affected communities and also allowed other participants including representatives from concern MACs to self-introduce themselves. The below listed were other MACs:

- National Bureau of Concession/NBC
- Ministry of Public Works
- National Port Authority
- Ministry of Internal Affairs and
- Ministry of Agriculture

Affected communities that were present in the meeting:

- Borbor Town
- Zelekai Town
- Bola Town
- Yembeh Town
- Gbah Town
- Dasalamu Town
- Coffersuah Town
- T K Town
- Bowah Town
- David Risk Town
- Kamanda Town

PRESENTATIONS

1. Director John K. Jallah

The Director of Compliance of Enforecemtn broaden the minds of the participants on the overview of the consultation. Informing participants, he said this stakeholder consultation is all about informing the public about the content of an Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA report submitted by Western Cluster Limited, Liberia/WCL through MAC-Africa Consultants.

Director Jallah said the process of bringing parties together to discuss the report is referred to as full disclosure. This process aims to gather input, address concerns, and promote transparency among stakeholders, including local communities, government authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other relevant parties.

He also informed the audience that whenever an ESIA study is done, it guides the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA in making an informed decision as it relates to the issuance of environmental permit or given full authorization to a company to operate in a particular community/ies.

He highlighted the following to include but not limited to:

- That the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA has been engaging with Western Cluster Limited, Liberia/WCL for about 2 decades
- That between the period 2025-2010, Western Cluster Limited, Liberia/WCL was involved with rehabilitation, preliminary scoping and reconnaissance
- That between 2010-2013, Western Cluster Limited, Liberia/WCL started the process of a full-scale ESIA study
- That based on the base-line studies, an Environmental Management Plan/EMP was developed to address impacts of the project on the environment or the people (air, water, land, etc.)
- That the Environmental Management Plan/EMP that was developed triggered the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA to review the Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA study report
- That between 2014-2016, there were some delays in the revision process due to institutional review, concession renegotiation, community engagement, Resettlement Action Plan/RAP, road corridor, climate change risks, etc.
- That between 2017-2019, there was a rebase-line commissioning and expanded scope of Western Cluster Limited, Liberia/WCL activities in relation to the accumulated impacts on heritage, biodiversity, etc. At that point in time a technical reengagement started with the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA
- That between 2020-2021, the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA had done its fourth revise guideline and procedure to meet emerging environmental issues
- That the environmental Protection Agency/EPA revised its Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA process in 2021. During this period, all class “A” projects needed to

comply fully with the revised Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA guidelines and procedures. During this period, there were renew community engagements

- That between 2021-2023, Western Cluster Limited, Liberia/WCL submitted their final updated Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA report based on the revised Environmental Protection Agency/EPA Environmental Social Impact Assessment guidelines and Procedures
- That between 2024-2025, the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA initiated a technical review committee to ensure that every detail mentioned in the revised Environmental Protection Agency/EPA Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA is been adhered to by Western Cluster Limited,
- That the Environmental protection Agency/EPA has always collaborated with relevant MACs like the Ministry of Public Works/MPW, Ministry of Mines and Energy/MME, Ministry of Transport/MOT and National Bureau of Concessions/NBC

Director Targen P. Daye

Assistant Director Daye, presented on the overview of the Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA process of Liberia. He started by informing the audience that the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA has the statutory mandate to protect and manage the environment. The law also provides that the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA develop a guideline and procedure to ensure that the environment and its people are safe at all times. Such guideline and procedure as developed by the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA is referred to as the Environmental Social Impact assessment/ESIA he said.

This process informed all parties to include the government, proponent, project affected communities, civil society organizations about the existing condition of the environment, that is all that you (the proponent) met on the ground before your undertaken should be restored to its pre project status or almost to its pre project status he added.

Asst. Director Daye also informed the audience that the law required that all stakeholders (government, proponent, project affected communities, and civil society organizations) be part of the process. He highlighted few of the Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA requirements that should be followed if one once to obtain an environmental permit.

- That the project proponent first applies through an application to the Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA
 - ✓ A response letter from the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA to the applicant informing him/her/the proponent about the Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA process
 - ✓ The applicant will be given a list of Environmental satisfied, licensed and independent consultants to do the Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA and submit a report to the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA for review

- ✓ If the report is accepted, the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA will then conduct a community engagement to disclose what's in the Environmental Social Impact Assessment report done by the satisfied, licensed and independent consultant's firm
- That part 7 of the Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA process required public hearing for all parties to know what's in the document so as to put all parties in a position to an informed decision.

He also informed the gathering that Western Cluster Limited, Liberia operated in Bomi before, but their operation was shut down. Later in 2024 Western Cluster Limited, Liberia came back to resume operation but again requested to do a revise Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA in accordance with the law and considering the revised 2021 Environmental Protection Agency/EPA guidelines and procedures.

Between 2024 and before July 24/2025, there were sticky issues that needed to be resolve before the issuance of the environmental permit to Western Cluster Limited, Liberia/WCL he added. We are having this stakeholder's consultation because we at the level of the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA satisfied with the revised Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA report submitted by Western Cluster Limited, Liberia.

One of the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA concerns was the transportation of ore by road from Bomi to the free Port of Monrovia. But with the revised Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA report submitted by Western Cluster Limited, Liberia, some of these sticky issues have been resolved in relation to below counts:

- That they will transport iron ore from a constructed jetty or mini port in Downen to the Free Port of Monrovia
- That they will build a haul road from the mine site to Downen mini port
- They will build 80 housing units during the 1st phase one of the project
- That a mine closure plan has also been developed by Western Cluster Limited, Liberia
- That they are going to construct an iron ore concentrator to separate from other resources
- That they will build a HFO plant

In concluding his presentation, Asst. Director Daye informed the audience that Western Cluster Limited, Liberia is now requesting the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA for an environmental permit not to operate but to solicit funding from their partner to fulfill what's contained in their revised Environmental Social Impact Assessment/ESIA report.

DISCUSSION

Town Chief of Zelekai Mr. Edwin B. Momolu expressed thanks to Western Cluster Limited, Liberia, the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA and the local leadership of the county for

organizing the consultation. The Chief recounted on most of the things they as community members are not satisfied with and had been talking about were made visible to them by way of technology through the various presentations made.

According to the Chief, Zelekai Town was the first community to benefit from a school for our children, constructed a hand pump, renovated a hand pump that was constructed by UNDP and up on now, they are our friends. But expressed two major concerns as indicated below:

- That whenever there is a blast, the sound affects them
- That they experienced chemical scent after the blast
- That there was no plan because iron ore was going by road

Since the government is coming in, we are satisfied thank you he concluded.

Elder Kollie represented Borbor Town expressed appreciation to all especially the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA for their inclusion in that they (Borbor Town) have never been captured in any of Western Cluster Limited, Liberia activities especially development. Elder Kollie too outlined the following below:

- That there has been opportunity for job and job training
- That there has been shaking after blasting
- That the water around them is not conducive for them any longer

Elder Kollie appeal for relocation of their town because where they live presently is death trap as he concluded.

Bola Town

Kamanda Town represented by Mr. Momo Goll, Town chief shower praises especially on the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA for bringing to light what they not know and some of what they have been complaining on in relation to WCL operations. He recounted on been ignored by WCL even when they are carrying on survey in and around our farm land. He highlighted the below as community's concern:

- That blasting is shaking our town
- That our farm land been destroyed
- That our wine trees are also been destroyed

In conclusion, Chief Goll called on the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA to come to their aid by making sure that Western Cluster Limited, Liberia does the right thing to affect the lives of the people especially project affected people.

Representing Dasalamu Town, Mr. Benba Nyen, Town Chief who showered the blessings of God on everyone present and thanked company in Western Cluster Limited, Liberia and everybody for the hard work. But on the contrary, he was also reminding everybody including WCL that they WCL has done nothing for them up to present. But was quick outline the following as indicated below:

- That they (WCL) blocked their major shortcut leading to Tubman Burg City
- That they promised school, water, opening of road, etc. but to no avail
- That we also experienced shaking and chemical scent whenever there is blasting

Let WCL come and see what's happening in our town, because we really need help. If they can direct us as to where to go or fix our houses because if that doesn't happen before WCL resumes operations, we think our houses will all come down he concluded.

Town Chief Domah Goll of Coffersuah Town indicated that there is no safe drinking water in their community and during the dry season, they are faced with safe drinking. We have only hand pump in our town and we've been appealing through a proposal for hand pump. He too highlighted the below listed.

- That our source of drinking, washing, etc. water (Mahel River) is also been use by WCL
- That they have promised, but filled to fulfill

I came to let you know that Western Cluster Limited, Liberia (WCL) is not willing to work with us, I thank you he concluded.

Thomas S. B. Weedor, Town Chief of T K Town who started by thanking the EPA, WCL and the government at large. He was quick to recognize that WCL constructed a hand pump in their town. Mr. Weedor informed the audience that their children are getting sick from the blasting and at a result, they are appealing for following below:

- The construction of a Clinic or the availability of a mobile clinic

Grateful we are and grateful we remain he ended.

Mr. Zinnah Kiazolu, Town chief of Gbowah Town who firstly recognized the efforts of the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA and the Chairman of the affected communities who he said is doing well as it relates to information dissemination on the operations of WCL. He too considered the below as community' concerns.

- That their palm isn't producing oil like due to contamination of their water by WCL
- That because of the contamination of their water, they are appealing for hand pump
- That they experiencing itching on their body after bathing with the contaminated water

We are appealing to Western Cluster Limited, Liberia to provide job opportunities for us whenever they resume operation as he concluded.

David Risk Town

Mr. Eric Sando Perry, Chairman affected communities firstly reemphasize on what other speakers touched. Informing the gathering, he said other affected residents could not be represented because of the limited invitation from EPA and promised to provide names of others affected towns for future engagement.

He thanked the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA for coming because on June 13 (the year was not provided) they had a protest insisting that EPA come and provide information on the ESIA report submitted by WCL before issuing an environmental permit. According to him, there were speculation filtering among residents that WCL is using chemicals, their waters are being contaminated by chemicals and diseases are around especially in communities that are in close proximity to the mining operation.

Mr. Perry later clarify or got to understand that the Environmental Protection Agency/EPA did issue environmental permit to WCL as was previous assumed him and others. He too also asked the below listed questions.

- What kind of chemical will be used by WCL when the operation starts
- That Western Region should be a priority when awarding contract
- What plan is on the book now that WCL will no longer be using the Bomi high way to transport iron ore to the Free Port of Monrovia
- What plan do they (WCL) have for the Bomi high way now that they will be constructing their own road
- What are the plans for relocation of towns very close to the mining operation
- What are plans for teachers teaching in schools that located in this project affected communities

In conclusion, Chairman Sando however is appealing for safe drinking water in the form of hand pumps for all project affected communities and the construction of a that will link disconnected communities like Coffersuah, Gbowah, etc.

Mr. Marshall, Co-Chair, affected communities accused the EPA of everything that went wrong before the stakeholder consultation. Highlighting the following to include but not limited to.

- That EPA is responsible for WCL not doing the needful
- That EPA is responsible for the problem they faced with in the county
- That EPA hasn't been in any of the affected community
- That EPA is not monitoring the environment where the mining is going on
- That EPA is not enforcing compliance
- That EPA has not been able to organize town hall meeting
- That EPA is not creating awareness in their communities
- That EPA is offering grant to citizens

Site Assessment and Community Engagement

First engagement with Borbor Town

Town Chief of Borbor Town, Oldman Saah T. Sollee (0777221172) said Western Cluster Limited, Liberia only constructed one hand pump and rehabilitated one. No job not even one, I am talking about myself, I am talking about the younger ones. Beside one hand pump nothing else but the below as listed below.

- They only gave us bombing sound from their blasting
- Our town Shaked when they are blasting
- They have not provided and job or even contract, especially our youth

The population of Borbor Town is 100 + with about 45 houses

Mr. Bonaza S. Kollie, elder/advisor of Borbor Town (0778677493) informed EPA that they We've been here since the 50s. He also said the company came for exploration during former president Sirleaf term and started full operation during former president Weah. We had a meeting with WCL when they first entered our community and asked them for assistance/made a request for latrine and other things, but we were told to go the government.

Since WCL operation started, they have not built even a toilet for us. We are only receiving assistance from Congo Mining. We have not been represented in any meeting; we have not signed any MOU whatsoever with WCL.

Oldman James Fayiah, Dean Elder, said WCL promised to give them car and send our children to school but that have not been realized. The have even block the only road our children have been using all these years when Liberia Mining Company/LMC was operating. He also said the blasting broke down part of their Palava hut that we rebuild. We were also promised chemical for our crops and seed rice for planting, but they did not fulfill also.

Mr. Eric Kollie, Youth Chair of Borbor Town (0770659569) appreciated the EPA for coming for the engagement and said if you don't come you will not know what's happening on the ground. Youth Chair also said he came and met the company operating. He too alluded to the fact that WCL constructed one hand pump in Borbor Town.

According to Mr. Kollie highlighted the following.

- That they have been affected by the blasting
- That their crops are not coming up well or are dying as a result of chemical

Madam Miatta James (0777585348) was interested in employment for their children because for them the elderly are only depending on farming, but since WCL started their operation, our crops are dying. We used to plant cucumber, pepper, bitter ball, okra, corn, rice, etc.

Since they stop operating have you experienced your crops dying? No, she said. Even our okra and other crops came up well. I am hurt because our children are not employed. I am begging them to take some of our children when they start operating. Even if they have opportunities for our children, they should come to us directly. We don't want them to pass through anybody.

As per our findings, only Borbor and Zelekai Towns are found within the project operation perimeter according to the report submitted to the EPA. But a MOU between Congo Mining and surrounding communities suggest that there are four affected towns to include 1. Borbor, Zelekai, Bola Towns and Tubman Burg City.

In conclusion, Director Jallah told Borbor Town residents to always contact the EPA through its Bomi County head inspector Mr. Wellington Ben. He also encouraged them to have regular

meetings because it was not a good thing to have a chairman and don't have a meeting. There is a possibility that these two towns could be relocated, so you have to give factual information because we can't be complaining of corruption when we ourselves are practicing corruption. If the right things are done, you could miss out a whole lot of things including employment, relocation, crops, etc.

Second engagement with Zelekai Town

Mr. Edwin B. Momolu, Town Chief of Zelekai Town welcome staff of the EPA and admonished residents not to give wrong information, but rather be hornets with everything they say or explain during the engagement. During his welcome remark, he also recognized the construction of a house for learning purpose for children under 5 years. Furthermore, he complained of chemical scent after blasting and the blockage of their of their road or the only short cut to Tubman Burg.

In a brief remark, Director Jallah thanked the people of Zelekai and told them that the team's visit was not just to discuss the documents that were submitted to the superintendent but to follow up on what happening on the ground, the impact of WCL's operation. We will also want to know whether you affected communities have had any agreement or meeting with WCL.

The independent evaluator (MAC-Africa Consultants) and company came did study and reported to the EPA. We (EPA) have come to find out everything about the report. That is the population, number houses, river, creek, farm, swamp, etc. After all these engagements with you, EPA will be in position to make informed decision on the operations of WCL.

Edwin B. Momolu, Town Chief of Zelekai (0777390931) WCL document was first signed by former senator Richard Divine. A map was introduced to them by an Indian Man and the map indicated the following coupled with their concerns.

- That Zelekai Town was right under the hill
- That Zelekai Town will be relocated in the future
- That Liberia Mining Company/LMC use to red flag and Sarine before blasting
- They stop our children from using the shorted route to Tubman Burg for school
- They also refused to provide transportation for our school going children
- Their blasting caused shaking and chemical scent

The only benefit we have received from Western Cluster Limited, Liberia visible to us are listed below.

- One constructed hand pump
- One rehabilitated hand pump
- One building for children under 5 without current and tiles
- We also received 6 tins of fuel

We have the following here in Zelekai Town.

- Youth group
- Women group

- Cooperative made of farmers

Zelekai Town population is 272 with about 37 houses

Peter Homie, citizen of Zelekai Town (0886952205) asserted that during WCL operation they told us they were going to erect sign board to indicate blasting hour but did not erect any on this side. At certain point in time, they stop all indicators including the alarm system. Blasting was done at any time with out our knowledge and this was risky and dangerous for us.

Moses B. Barsee, Assistant Youth Chair (0770960908) was concern about employment, indicating that since WCL started their operation, we the youth haven had the opportunity to be employ, except for one who is a contractor. He also told the EPA that they were seeing splits or cracks in their community and called the attention of WCL, their Chairman Eric Sando Perry and Victor Johnson, Lia

Ben Dorley, Elder of Zelekai Town informed the EPA that WCL always collecting water sample but don't bring results back to us.

Phillip Kollie, Youth Chairman, (0779356074) said when WCL resumes operation, they should provide job opportunity for we the youth of Zelekai Town in order to share with our elderly. Total number of youths is around 35-42.

Wilson F. Haye, Deputy Elder of zelekai Town, WCL has not been able to satisfy the issue of relocation, safe drinking water and cracks on my home.

Morris Johnson, member of the town (0779058582):

Site Assessment

In continuation of the stakeholders consultation, a one day site assessment was conducted at the Western Cluster Liberia open pit iron ore mine in Bomi Hills. The site assessment was meant to ascertain the onground complexion of the mine. The team met with the Health and Safety Manager and Director Jallah of the department of compliance and enforcement briefed the management of Western Cluster Liberia about the assessment purpose. Below are key findings from the assessment.

- The Mine is temporarily shutdown and undergoing maintenance
- Safety signages are available throughout the facility
- Kongo Mining trucks were seen in the concession collecting waste rock for road maintenance purpose.

CONCLUSION

The consultative meeting was a success. It brings every obstacle to a level plain field for the recommencement of the project. The local authority and the towns' dwellers have embraced the project with an open arms. The importance of the ESIA process was properly explained and the locals are aware of the benefits of the project and there will be nothing expected from outside of that which was explained. On the other hand, it is important to ensure that issues raised during the meeting be addressed adequately before Western Cluster Liberia fully resume operation. It helps to reduce violence and provide a clear picture of what the project seeks to address, the company's operational limit, the benefits, risk attached and how these impacts will be mitigated.

RECOMMENDATIONS;

PHOTOS: