This Year’s AGM Season Has Not Been Kind to Investors in Amazon Destruction

The companies and banks behind Amazon destruction are feeling the heat as this year’s season of shareholder meetings comes to a close. Civil society, frontline communities, and investors alike are calling out the ways in which capital injected into extractive industries such as oil and mining leads to deforestation, biodiversity loss, and the violation of Indigenous rights in the Amazon – all while pushing the planet closer to climate catastrophe.
As companies continue to use tightening SEC rules and convenient COVID precautions to restrict participation and hide behind weak ESG policies, Amazon Watch, together with frontline communities, pursued various strategies to hold extractive industries and those that finance them to account.

From demanding accountability outside of corporate headquarters to presenting the financial, social, and environmental risks of investments to regulators and high-level decision-makers at multibillion-dollar firms, our efforts are having an effect. This 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) season proved to be a critical inflection point for Amazon Watch’s End Amazon Crude and Mining Out of the Amazon campaigns.
End Amazon Crude: Petroperú Can’t Hide from Indigenous Leaders

In April, amid the AGMs of the world’s largest U.S. banks, Amazon Watch supported a delegation of Indigenous leaders from the Achuar, Wampís, and Chapra Nations from the Peruvian Amazon to New York City and Washington, DC to confront major U.S. banks such as JPMorgan Chase and Citi, for their financing of state-run oil company, Petroperú.

Petroperú plans to pursue new oil expansion in highly-contested blocks in the north Peruvian coast and Peruvian Amazon to feed its Talara Refinery, which is deeply in debt after receiving more than $4.5 billion in loans and bond underwriting by banks.

In the month that followed the delegation’s visit, Petroperú received three credit downgrades from agencies such as Fitch and S&P Global.
JPMorgan Chase

The push for Indigenous rights received significant support at JPMorgan Chase's recent AGM, where over 30% of investors backed a shareholder resolution calling for more transparency on its Indigenous rights policies, citing material risk should it fail to implement effective due diligence.

Presenting this resolution was Olivia Bisa Tirko, president of the Chapra Nation, and a fierce opponent of oil operations in her communities’ territory. In her speech, she called attention to JPMorgan's adverse financing of Petroperú and its history of toxic oil spills from its North Peruvian Pipeline.

This vote signifies a growing awareness among investors to address the destructive impacts of corporate activities in the Amazon.

Citi

In a show of solidarity with other frontline communities impacted by Citi’s fossil financing, the delegation from Peru also participated in a series of events in New York, such as The People vs. Citi Trial, to bring the demands of the MarAmazonía alliance to an international stage.

The delegation, alongside Amazon Watch, also met with Citi representatives to express concerns regarding the bank's financing of Petroperú and present findings from a new report outlining the financial, environmental, legal, and social risks of investing in the company.

Citi, in its AGM, also faced a resolution calling for more transparency on the effectiveness of its Indigenous rights policies, citing the bank as one of the biggest funders of Amazon oil and gas.
End Amazon Crude:
Chevron in the Spotlight and Under Pressure

May was a month of relentless action, with communities from California to Ecuador uniting to protest against Chevron's ongoing environmental and human rights abuses.

The culmination of these demonstrations occurred at Chevron's AGM, where activists and Indigenous representatives demanded an end to the company's destructive practices. Their voices echoed the frustration and anger of those who have suffered from Chevron's pollution, reinforcing the urgent need for corporate responsibility and restorative justice.

A shareholder resolution from the American Baptist Home Mission Society called for a third-party report on Chevron's human rights practices. The resolution, introduced by Richmond environmental justice activist Alfredo Angulo received a significant 22% Yes vote from shareholders. This resolution not only cites the 2021 report *Chevron's Global Destruction*, but Chevron's Ecuador liability and its strategy of legal bullying through SLAPP suits.
Mining Out of the Amazon: Increasing Distrust in Solaris Resources

In a victory for Indigenous peoples resisting mining in the Ecuadorian Amazon, Canadian mining company Solaris Resources faced major setbacks over the development of its Warintza copper project.

In one of the first actions of its kind, the company was subject to a complaint before the British Columbia Securities Commission (BCSC) for misrepresentation and omitting material facts regarding the lack of consultation and consent of local Indigenous peoples in disclosures to the BCSC and thereby misleading investors.

The company was also forced to rectify various misleading technical claims about the project in its disclosures last month. Shortly after, a decision from the International Labor Organization (ILO) concluded in its report that indeed, consultation and consent had not been conducted, affirming the project’s lack of social license to operate.
It also faced a significant drop in share price when its CAD $130 million equity investment deal with Zijin Mining fell through. It is more evident that the increase in conflict in Shuar territory is directly correlated to the fall in the company's share price and has affected its ability to attract capital, jeopardizing the viability of the project and the company. As Solaris prepares for its June 24th AGM, it suffers from lowered investor confidence as evidenced by its decreased share prices.

Conclusion

As the backlash against Amazon extraction intensifies, it is clear that corporations can no longer ignore the voices of Indigenous communities, civil society, and their own investors.

The call for sustainable and ethical investment practices is louder than ever, demanding that companies prioritize the well-being of the planet and its people over profit. This transformative movement is paving the way for a future where the Amazon can thrive, protected by those who have called it home for millennia.