

MEREDITH CROSS
Director, Division of Corporate Finance
Securities and Exchange Commission

Dear Ms. Cross and all of the SEC:

I know that industry is lobbying you at the SEC relentlessly for the weakest possible enforcement requirements on Dodd-Frank Title XV amendment to the Financial Reform Package.

You need to know, however, that millions upon millions of American citizens want the strictest possible enforcement of that law implemented. We are going to be furious if you cave in to industry pressures to let industry off the regulatory hook after we have fought so hard to do what we can to impede the conflict mineral trade that is fueling nightmarish violence in DR Congo.

I just spent the last week, freezing, outside of the State Department, as part of the OUTCRY FOR CONGO campaign, with a group of mothers from around the country. In one short week, with only 2 days of planning, we had 638,000 views of our Outcry for Congo Facebook postingsand we had barely tapped into the support that is already in place for a larger role by the U.S. government in ending the violence in Congo.

With a death toll that is likely approaching 7 million now (2 years after the IRC mortality determined 5.4 million had died and 45,000 new deaths occurring monthly), and a new study finding 3 million Congolese women have been raped (to be published by June in the Journal of Public Health, there is NO EXCUSE for buying into industries manipulations for a softer, easier hand on their exploitation of conflict minerals. MAJOR U.S. INDUSTRIES SIMPLY CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE PROFITING FROM THE BLOOD AND SUFFERING OF THE CONGOLESE PEOPLE.

MILITIA USE TERROR TO GAIN AND MAINTAIN CONTROL OF MINING TERRITORIES. It is a simple formula: burn 47 people alive one day, behead 29 more less than a week later, all the while raping every woman and child you come across, and poof, the locals disappear, leaving you free to mine to your heart's content. Many of the women who are raped are mutilated in the process. Some require YEARS of surgery, and still the damage to their organs cannot be repaired. They have no way to support their surviving children...and children are dying in massive numbers as a result.

The American public does not want products that are saturated with Congolese blood and suffering.

The conflict minerals trade is universally recognized as the primary driving force behind the violence.

We expect you to fully enforce the disclosure and reporting requirements of this bill. If you fail to give Dodd-Frank Title XV maximum teeth, you will be aligning yourselves with the militias who are burning whole families and villages alive, and who are raping and grotesquely

mutilating MILLIONS of Congolese women. And we are NOT going to let the American public forget it.

Our shared humanity is at stake here. It was Hewlett-Packard itself that estimated the cost of the audits required by the bill to be at less than 1 penny per product at an industry group, without a word of protest from anyone else present at that meeting. This is no "burden" on industry. It is the minimum required to maintain our humanity.

We in the U.S. cannot devalue African and Congolese lives at less than a penny per product. Even slave owners valued them at more than that. If it was your mother, your sister, your children being butchered, gang raped and burned alive, or hiding in the forest for months at a time contracting malaria and starving to death, you would do all you can to stop this. The Congolese ARE our brothers and sisters. Their children ARE our children. Americans are waking up to this, and we expect you to do the same and act on our behalf and theirs.

Thank you,
Ann Shannon
Co-Founder, A Thousand Sisters Campaign
Co-Founder, Outcry for Congo Campaign