



Dear Acting Chairman Piwowar,

On behalf of The Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), I submit this statement in strong support for Section 1502 of the Dodd Frank Act.

Section 1502 requires manufacturing companies that use tin, tungsten, tantalum and gold in their products to conduct supply chain due diligence, has put more scrutiny on companies sourcing minerals from armed groups, and has led to a reduction in the visible presence of armed groups from mining sites in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

The original draft legislation for section 1502 included livelihood programs to assist mining communities in their transition to a conflict-free economy. These programs and aid initiatives were not included in the final section 1502 legislation. Therefore, the livelihoods of Congolese miners were never improved as intended. Addressing the slave-like conditions these miners work in and the violence and corruption resulting from illicit mining practices should not be abandoned. Artisan miners have not been driven to poverty by the Dodd Frank Act; they are driven to poverty by ongoing armed conflict and repeated takeover of their mines by militias. The conflict that drives miners into poverty, ironically, is funded by the precious minerals they are mining.

The CRCNA is a bi-national denomination in the United States and Canada with a membership of over 280,000 individuals. With the CRCNA, World Renew, and other NGOs, I was involved in creating and negotiating the 2002 Kimberly Process, which was established to allow the certification of conflict-free diamonds. I was also present in Sierra Leone during the 1990s when violence reached its height due to conflict minerals and illicit mining practices.

Section 1502 of the Dodd Frank Act aims to end nearly 20 years of mineral fueled conflict and human rights abuses in eastern Congo and Africa and hold multinational corporations accountable for how their products fuel this conflict. Doing away with Section 1502 will result in continued oppression and violence and it will undo years of work toward conflict-free mining in Africa. Section 1502 should be strengthened and fully implemented, not eliminated.

Sincerely,



Peter Vander Meulen  
Coordinator  
Office of Social Justice  
Christian Reformed Church in North America