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Chilean owner of Trump-backed mine has history of corruption, pollution

Andronico Luksic owns Antofagasta, the company vying to open a mine near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area -- a world-class destination for recreation near the Canadian border in Minnesota.

At the start of the Trump administration, he made headlines for renting his home in Washington D.C. to Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump. What is less known is that he has used the same kinds of tactics to grease the wheels for a dangerous mine in his home country of Chile.

The corruption, pollution, and dangerous conditions that plagued his project in Chile are poised to come to the United States if President Donald Trump's administration approves his plan to mine in the Minnesota wilderness.

Pollution

People in the community near Antofagasta's Los Pelambres mine have long opposed it, [arguing](#) in part that a hydroelectric dam that was built to power the operations [say](#) it has caused critical water shortages.



The mine itself has been responsible for a number of employee [deaths](#), has polluted drinking water, and its structural integrity in the event of an earthquake is under doubt. The London Mining Network [reports](#) the following official government actions have been taken against the mine:

- The Chilean Supreme Court ruled the tailings dam for the mine a “danger to human life;”
- Chilean environmental regulators have fined the mine US\$2.3 million for its damage to cultural resources;
- As many as 9 other charges have been leveled against the mine for violations.

Corruption

Far from every attempt to hold Antofagasta has been successful thanks to his extensive political influence. The government of Chile [allegedly](#) aided the company in evading punishment for illegally dumping waste in Argentina. At the time, the Chilean Minister of Mining was a former Antofagasta employee.

More recently, the son of Chilean President Michele Bachelet [successfully secured](#) a US\$10 million loan from a bank controlled by Luksic, having already suffered delays at other financial institutions. The money was used to buy land that was sold only months later at a profit of US\$15 million.

Worst of all, President Bachelet's Chief of Staff resigned after [evidence came to light](#) that he colluded with Luksic by providing confidential information about mining. His private consulting firm was being paid by Antofagasta at the same time he was working

Luksic's brushes with corruption have a long history and do not stop at the Chilean border. In 2001, he was issued [an arrest warrant](#) in Peru for bribing an official in disgraced former Prime Minister Alberto Fujimori's cabinet. In 1993, he secured a court order [to block the import](#) of an Argentinian book that alleged extensive corruption in the Chilean government.

proponents for the Twin Metals mine. Congressman Emmer has addressed the Society [a number of times](#).

All of these facts combine to raise serious questions about the integrity of the process leading up to the approval of the Twin Metals mine. They must be answered before any further action is taken.

on issues of interest to the mine.

Coming to America?

Luksic has made a concerted effort to rub elbows with powerful decision-makers since beginning his interest in mining the Minnesota north country. Besides renting a home to Jared and Ivanka Trump, he [reportedly](#) met the President at a Patriots game in Boston.

The Chilean billionaire also holds a leadership position at the [Americas Society](#), serving as a co-chairman, and is one of its top donors, contributing between \$50,000 and \$99,999. Minnesota Congressman Tom Emmer is one of the leading political