

# "The Regional Environmental Office Tells Us They Cannot Share the Decree"

Mayor of Sierra Gorda, Adriana Rivera, addresses the controversy surrounding the government's decision to declare the commune a "Saturated Zone" after meeting with mining companies operating in the area.

## MERCURIO DE ANTOFAGASTA

By José Fco. Montecino Lemus

Twenty-four hours after the announcement by the Regional Environmental Minister, Gustavo Riveros, regarding the declaration of Sierra Gorda as a "Saturated Zone," Mayor Adriana Rivera reiterated: "The government has still not informed us of anything. We are completely unaware of the basis of the decree, what provisional measures they plan to impose. We know nothing."

Following the unexpected news, the municipal leader held a virtual meeting with the major mining companies operating around her city. Three of these—Spence (BHP), Centinela (Antofagasta Minerals), and Sierra Gorda SCM—are located within the designated saturated zone.

The purpose of the meeting, the mayor explained, was "mainly to gather information. Unfortunately, we do not have the decree itself, nor does anyone else." However, she hinted at the possibility of obtaining air quality data for the commune, which could provide insight into the conditions. "There has indeed been an increase in fine particulate matter over the past three years, compared to previous years. But we need to analyze what is causing this, and that remains unknown. A thorough assessment is necessary to understand the basis for the Regional Environmental Minister's decision to declare part of Sierra Gorda a saturated zone."

"The regional environmental office itself tells us they cannot share the decree. How can they not share the decree, which is a public document and directly affects us? How am I supposed to make decisions about someone else's house without consulting the homeowner?" Rivera questioned.

She also pointed out that mining companies are equally in the dark. "They have no knowledge of the decree's justification, nor have they seen the decree itself. We are completely in the dark. There is a clear lack of transparency in how this issue has been handled," she said.

### More Questions Than Answers

Rivera cited previous experiences, such as Calama's designation as a saturated zone, which resulted in a 15-year-old decontamination plan that has had little effect. "This raises concerns about what the government intends to do. We, as the most directly affected stakeholders, need to understand whether the proposed measures are efficient or even applicable to our area," she added.

- Could this measure lead to economic losses?

"We don't know if there will be losses. We cannot discuss losses if we don't even have the decree or know the provisional measures being proposed."

- Would you consider reaching out to the regional delegate?

"I met with the delegate last week, and we discussed many topics... but not this one, because it was not even mentioned."

- What conclusions were drawn from the meeting?

"For now, we are focused on gathering and sharing any available information. We cannot speculate without hard data. What does the decree say? What are we being required to do? On what basis was the decree issued?

Were there specific factors in the past three years that caused increased pollution? Were these factors temporary or permanent, and do they truly justify this classification? Because these air quality changes have only appeared in the past three years. The mining operations have been here for over 20 years. What changed in the past three years? There has been no increase in production. The processes are either unchanged or even more environmentally friendly. This needs to be analyzed."

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### SEREMI GUSTAVO RIVEROS:

"The Regional Environmental Office Requested Information from Sierra Gorda Municipality in 2023"

When contacted, Regional Environmental Minister Gustavo Riveros responded in writing to the controversy over Sierra Gorda's "Saturated Zone" designation.

- What actions are triggered by declaring a commune a saturated zone?

"The declaration process is currently underway and will take effect once the Office of the Comptroller General approves it and it is published in the Official Gazette. Once this occurs, the Ministry of the Environment must develop the corresponding Atmospheric Decontamination Plan (PDA) for Sierra Gorda.

Additionally, under the law governing saturated zones, provisional measures may be implemented, always with the goal of protecting public health, preserving the environment, and considering the territorial realities. This declaration presents an opportunity to balance economic development with the protection of public health."

- Was local leadership consulted at any point?

"The Regional Environmental Office formally requested information from the Sierra Gorda Municipality in September 2023 as part of the process of drafting the 'Saturated Zone' declaration. Additionally, in 2024, there was communication between professionals from both institutions regarding the progress of this declaration. Furthermore, the development of a decontamination plan is based on data and scientific evidence, while also including a participatory process that involves civil society, relevant public agencies, academia, and the regulated private sector. This ensures that the regulatory process is participatory, robust, and transparent."

- Were mining companies consulted before this decision was made?

"During the PDA development process—set to begin once the 'Saturated Zone' decree is published—all affected parties will be engaged through formal instances such as operational committees and expanded operational committees. This will include local authorities as well as private-sector representatives. As I previously stated, public participation is a key element in drafting these plans."

- How might this impact industrial operations in the area?

"It is important to emphasize that the PDA aims to improve the air quality for Sierra Gorda residents. Its objective is not to shut down operations but rather to regulate pollutant emissions to protect the health of the local population, residents, and workers in the area."

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### **Mining Companies on High Alert**

Regarding the situation, Felipe Alveal, Public Affairs Manager at Antofagasta Minerals, stated that for Minera Centinela, "ensuring human well-being and environmental harmony is a fundamental part of our operations."

"For this reason, since our inception, we have worked on plans and projects aligned with public institutions and local communities, beyond just responding to contingencies. In this context, we are attentive and ready to proactively collaborate in discussions that promote sustainable regional growth," he added.

Meanwhile, Spence (BHP) stated that it has "a high-standard particulate matter reduction plan in Sierra Gorda, which includes continuous emissions monitoring and ongoing evaluation of new technologies. The company has also consistently engaged with local authorities, the community, and other industry stakeholders on this issue."

# Antofagasta Minerals Increases Profits in 2024, Boosted by Higher Copper Prices

"We are encouraged by the outlook for copper, as demand remains strong," said the company's CEO, Iván Arriagada.

**PULSO**

**By Reuters Agency**

Chilean copper miner Antofagasta Minerals reported an 11% increase in annual core profit on Tuesday, driven by a rise in metal prices.

The company's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) for the year reached \$3.43 billion, up from \$3.09 billion the previous year.

The proposed final dividend of 23.5 cents per share represents a payout of 50% of underlying earnings per share.

In 2021, Antofagasta paid a record dividend of 142.5 cents per share, amounting to \$1.4 billion. The company's policy is to return at least 35% of net profits to shareholders.

Capital expenditures amounted to \$2.4 billion last year and are expected to surge to \$3.9 billion in 2025 as work on its Centinela concentrator reaches its peak. Meanwhile, net debt rose to \$1.63 billion by the end of 2024, compared to \$1.16 billion the previous year.

Analysts had forecast net debt to be around \$2 billion.

"The stronger-than-expected net debt is useful as Antofagasta enters its highest capital expenditure budget year," analysts at Peel Hunt noted in a report.

The company operates four copper mines in Chile. The anticipated surge in copper demand, driven by its use in energy transition applications such as solar panels and electric vehicles, pushed up the stock prices of pure-play copper miners in 2024. Antofagasta's shares rose 15% over the year.

"We are encouraged by the outlook for copper, as demand remains strong and global constraints such as declining ore grades, mineral hardness, and capex inflation are steadily limiting expansions of existing supply," said CEO Iván Arriagada in a statement.

# Government Maintains Stance on Dominga: Will Appeal Court Ruling and Assert Right to Defense

■ The Undersecretary of the Environment stated that the Committee of Ministers made a decision "in accordance with the law and the Tribunal's own ruling."

**Diario Financiero – February 19, 2025**

**By Patricia Marchetti**

The government, through Undersecretary of the Environment Maximiliano Proaño, defended the Committee of Ministers after the First Environmental Tribunal ordered it to issue a new resolution on the Dominga mining-port project, determining that officials had failed to comply with the previous ruling in their most recent vote. In a video statement, Proaño declared, "Regarding the resolution, as a ministry, we are analyzing its content, but certain elements stand out."

He continued, "For example, it forces the Environmental Assessment Service (SEA), which serves as the technical secretariat of the ministerial committee, to alter a decision of the Committee of Ministers, even though it does not have the authority to do so."

Proaño also announced that "the SEA will file an appeal against this resolution in the coming days, arguing that the Committee of Ministers reviewed its composition, held a session, and made a decision in full accordance with the law and the Tribunal's own ruling."

Lastly, he asserted, "Exercising the legal defense tools available within our legal system is our right, and we will assert it."

In its ruling issued on Monday, the First Environmental Tribunal determined that the Committee of Ministers overstepped in its January 8 vote by introducing two new issues to justify its latest rejection of the project, which were not part of the original ruling.

That original ruling, issued by the Tribunal on December 9, 2024, had declared the Committee of Ministers' January 2023 vote "illegal" and ordered a new vote within 15 days.

Monday's ruling detailed that the inappropriate issues raised in the new resolution included claims from Oceana and other opponents regarding the project's impact on the species Pacul and Algarrobilla, as well as the insufficiency of the Contingency and Emergency Plan for hydrocarbon spills.

As a result, the Tribunal annulled and invalidated the vote on those matters, which had served as the basis for the subrogating ministers' rejection of Dominga.

Consequently, the resolution that had nullified the project's Environmental Qualification Resolution (RCA) was revoked until a new resolution is issued. This means that, as of now, Dominga's environmental approval remains in effect.

Additionally, the Tribunal determined that the Committee had failed to comply with its ruling by not holding the vote within the required 15-day period.

## **Company Denounces "Unprecedented and Serious" Actions**

Following the Tribunal's decision, Andes Iron, the company behind Dominga and linked to the Délano family, welcomed the ruling and expressed hope that "this time, the environmental justice system's instructions will be followed and that it will finally be recognized that the technical discussion regarding our project has concluded, as it fully complies with environmental regulations."

The company further argued that the ruling "demonstrates an unprecedented and serious action by the Committee of Ministers in refusing to abide by judicial rulings."

Given that the Tribunal's ruling reinstates the project's RCA, the company announced that, in the meantime, "it will resume the processing of sectoral permits necessary to begin construction."

Furthermore, Andes Iron pointed out that the ruling leaves open the possibility of imposing coercive measures should the Committee of Ministers continue to defy the Tribunal's decision, in accordance with Article 240 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

## **Alianza Humboldt Prepares Legal Action**

On the opposing side, attorneys for Alianza Humboldt—a coalition of organizations opposing Dominga—described the ruling as "unprecedented" and "illegal."

“We will file a complaint with the Supreme Court to rectify this situation and order the Antofagasta Environmental Tribunal to adhere to the law, as this ruling threatens the legal framework of the system and raises questions about the motivations behind this decision,” stated Alejandra Donoso, director of Defensoría Ambiental and representative of various communities in La Higuera.

Marcos Emilfork, legal coordinator at NGO FIMA and representative of the Association of Fishermen and Shellfish Harvesters of Los Choros, asserted that “by ordering the approval of Dominga, the Tribunal is attempting something it is strictly prohibited from doing—determining the decision of the authority, in this case, the Committee of Ministers.”

He added, “Given this overreach, the legal system provides remedies, and we will seek to correct this serious violation.”

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Andes Iron, the company behind Dominga, urged authorities to “comply with the environmental justice ruling and finally acknowledge that the technical discussion regarding our project is concluded.”

*Experts debate whether the ruling could lead to a fourth vote by the Committee of Ministers.*

## **Government Challenges New Environmental Tribunal Ruling on Dominga and Seeks to Extend Judicial Process**

From the Ministry of the Environment, officials stated that the Environmental Assessment Service (SEA) does not have the authority to modify a resolution under the terms ordered by the Environmental Tribunal.

**El Mercurio de Santiago – February 19, 2025**  
**By Catalina Muñoz-Kappes**

The government announced that it will appeal the ruling of the First Environmental Tribunal (1TA), which nullified the key aspects of the Committee of Ministers' rejection of the Dominga mining-port project. The decision was originally made by the Committee in January of this year.

"Regarding the ruling of the First Environmental Tribunal of Antofagasta, as a ministry, we are analyzing its content. However, some elements are already concerning, such as the fact that it obligates the Technical Secretariat, which is the Environmental Assessment Service (SEA), to alter a decision of the Committee of Ministers when that secretariat does not have the authority to do so," said acting Minister of the Environment, Maximiliano Proaño, yesterday.

He added that the SEA "will file an appeal against this ruling in the coming days, arguing that the Committee of Ministers reviewed its composition, held a session, and made a decision in accordance with the law and the ruling of the very same Environmental Tribunal. Using the defense tools provided by our legal system is a right, and we will exercise that right."

This action would further extend the legal proceedings of a project that began in 2013 and has been navigating a complex path of approvals and rejections under various administrations.

### **Debate Over SEA's Authority**

The Environmental Tribunal nullified the Committee of Ministers' resolution that classified Dominga as "environmentally unfavorable" and required "state agencies to deny authorizations or sectoral environmental permits." Instead, the Tribunal ruled that the SEA, as the technical secretariat of the Committee of Ministers, must issue a complementary ruling addressing the annulled resolutions.

However, legal experts debate whether the SEA has the authority to modify a resolution made by the Committee of Ministers.

Emanuel Ibarra, a partner at the law firm Moreno, Sáez & Avilés and former legal counsel for the Superintendency of the Environment (SMA), argues that "the law does not grant such powers to the Executive Directorate of the SEA. Logically, the Committee of Ministers should issue a new ruling to complement the decision requested by the Environmental Tribunal."

Conversely, Ricardo Irrazábal, an environmental law professor at Pontificia Universidad Católica and former Undersecretary of the Environment during Sebastián Piñera's first administration, contends that "the SEA, as a government agency, is subject to the oversight of the Environmental Tribunals. Since the Tribunal has ordered a modification, there is no longer room for discussion from the Committee of Ministers."

### **A Fourth Vote?**

The SEA's role is not the only uncertainty following the 1TA ruling. It is also unclear whether the issuance of the complementary ruling by the SEA will require a new vote by the Committee of Ministers.

Ibarra points out that "the key issue is whether the Executive will determine that, for legal validity, the Committee of Ministers must reconvene to issue this complementary ruling. By law, that is the appropriate body to act."

Irrazábal, however, argues that another vote is unnecessary since there are no pending claims to resolve, which is the Committee's primary function. "The Committee might be incentivized to reconvene, claiming that this matter must be settled by them to introduce an additional argument that justifies maintaining the rejection. That would clearly be an institutional failure," he warns.

Former Environment Minister Marcelo Mena, who served during Michelle Bachelet's second administration, also criticized the 1TA ruling.

"In practice, the Environmental Tribunal is scrutinizing every aspect of the Committee of Ministers' reasoning and resolution, ordering them to reverse it. This concerns elements raised by Conaf and the Contingency Plan—issues that have justified the project's rejection from the very beginning. It seems like an overly targeted intervention, stripping the Committee of Ministers of any decision-making freedom and effectively forcing project approval," Mena stated.

#### **Status of the Environmental Approval (RCA)**

There is also no consensus on whether the Tribunal's ruling reinstates Dominga's Environmental Qualification Resolution (RCA). Andes Iron, the project's owner, stated yesterday that "given that the ruling of the First Environmental Tribunal reinstates the project's RCA, the company will proceed with the processing of sectoral permits required to begin construction."

However, Marcos Emilfork, legal coordinator of NGO FIMA and representative of the Association of Fishermen and Shellfish Harvesters of Los Choros, which opposes Dominga, countered that "Dominga's RCA is currently classified as unfavorable. To change that, it would need to be challenged through the appropriate legal process before the Environmental Tribunal."

Andes Iron also reiterated its expectation that "this time, the instructions of the environmental justice system will be followed, and it will finally be acknowledged that the technical debate over our project is concluded."

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"The SEA will file an appeal against this ruling in the coming days, arguing that the Committee of Ministers reviewed its composition, held a session, and made a decision in accordance with the law and the ruling of the very same Environmental Tribunal."

— Maximiliano Proaño, Acting Minister of the Environment

"(We hope) that this time, the instructions of the environmental justice system will be followed."

— Andes Iron, Owner of the Dominga Project

"This seems like an overly targeted intervention, stripping the Committee of Ministers of any decision-making freedom."

— Marcelo Mena, Former Minister of the Environment

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The First Environmental Tribunal nullified key aspects of the decision made by the Committee of Ministers in January (pictured), an instance that had to be composed of substitute members following the disqualification of its regular members.

# Former Environment Ministers Divided Over New Court Ruling on Dominga Project

Javier Naranjo and Marcelo Mena, former environment ministers under the second administrations of Sebastián Piñera and Michelle Bachelet, respectively, analyzed the latest ruling by the First Environmental Court, which ordered the Committee of Ministers to issue a supplementary resolution after determining—by a split decision—that it had partially failed to comply with the ruling that revived the controversial mining-port project in La Higuera.

**PULSO**

**By Víctor Guillou**

Another chapter in the ongoing dispute between the First Environmental Court (1TA) and the Committee of Ministers has emerged in the lengthy and complex approval process for the controversial Dominga mining-port project.

On Monday, the specialized judicial body ordered the executive director of the Environmental Assessment Service (SEA), in its role as the technical secretariat of the Committee of Ministers, to issue a supplementary act to the one released on January 8. The new act must "comply with the provisions of this resolution within ten days from when this ruling becomes final and enforceable."

The 1TA ruling came after it partially accepted the Committee of Ministers' non-compliance claim, determining that the December 9, 2024 ruling had been upheld only in the part that dismissed public participation claims and incorporated two voluntary environmental commitments. However, the administrative act was modified in its core aspects, where it had previously accepted observations from CONAF regarding environmental impacts on flora and deemed contingency and emergency plans insufficient for handling hydrocarbon spills and iron concentrate discharges in maritime transport.

According to the court, the Committee of Ministers' conclusions on these points constituted a breach of the December 9 ruling, which had revived the project led by Andes Iron.

However, legal experts remain divided on the issue.

For former Environment Minister Marcelo Mena, who served under Michelle Bachelet's second administration, "common sense would have dictated allowing the Supreme Court to settle the dispute between the Environmental Court and the Committee of Ministers. However, the Environmental Court insisted on issuing a new ruling, and in this context, the SEA will almost certainly appeal this decision as well."

Mena asserts that "this will undoubtedly be litigated again, because it seems that the only outcome the Environmental Court is interested in is approval. But that is not how environmental governance works. Environmental authorities exist for a reason, and executive power is non-delegable—it does not rest with the Environmental Court."

He further argues that the new ruling "clearly attempts to restrict the Committee of Ministers' decision-making power to the point where the only acceptable outcome appears to be project approval. This constitutes undue interference in the Committee's autonomy, which the Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld as having broad authority in such matters."

Mena also points out that "limiting the decision to previously adjudicated issues, barring consideration of new arguments, effectively forces the approval of Dominga, which is not appropriate. It constrains the Committee of Ministers' authority and renders the environmental review process meaningless. The Environmental Court is essentially compelling the Committee of Ministers to ignore public concerns raised during the appeals process."

On the other hand, former Environment Minister Javier Naranjo, who served under Sebastián Piñera's second administration—during which Piñera had business ties to Minera Activa, the original owner of the Dominga project—stated that "this ruling reaffirms what I and others have already said: the Committee of Ministers' rejection of the project made no sense."

He asserts that "it was clearly unprofessional for the Committee to reject the project when the Environmental Court had already outlined the framework within which it was to make its decision."



Despite Article 30 of Law 20.600, which governs Environmental Courts and explicitly states that the court cannot replace an administrative act, Naranjo dismisses claims that the 1TA is ordering project approval. Instead, he argues that it is merely ensuring compliance with legal standards.

"This is about the principle of consistency. If a legal discussion starts in a certain manner, and I rule on it in a specific way, then that discussion must remain consistent throughout the process. The Committee of Ministers changed its reasoning midway through, which is not legally sound," Naranjo explains.

"The Committee of Ministers must resolve the matter in accordance with the law, rather than inventing justifications to achieve a politically convenient outcome," he adds.

From a political perspective, Naranjo believes that "it appears the government has politicized the Dominga case ever since the President publicly declared his opposition to the project during his campaign. This essentially committed his administration to rejecting it. The court is not mandating approval—it is simply stating, 'Do what you must, but do not repeat actions that we have already ruled as illegal.'"

*Peruvian Vice Minister of Fisheries, Jesús Barrientos:*

## **Chancay Port “Positions Us More Competitively in the Region”**

■ He urges Chile and Ecuador to form a united front against the presence of foreign vessels off their coasts.

**MERCURIO DE SANTIAGO**  
**J. BAEZA & N. BIRCHMEIER**

The megaport of Chancay will boost Peru's economy by facilitating greater trade and access to new markets. This is how Jesús Barrientos, Peru's Vice Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, describes the economic impact of this port infrastructure for his country.

He acknowledges that developing such a massive project was not easy. However, “this infrastructure puts us in a more competitive position in the region,” Barrientos states during his visit to Chile for the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO) convention. The Peruvian government inaugurated the port complex in November last year, with Chinese President Xi Jinping in attendance. The project, backed by Chinese capital, required an investment of US\$3.5 billion.

In Chile, some maritime and port sector stakeholders argue that local infrastructure is falling behind Peru due to delays in expanding Valparaíso Terminal 2 and the San Antonio megaport.

This situation could challenge Chile's export capacity in the medium term. The shipping company OOCL, a subsidiary of Cosco Shipping Lines (the main shareholder of the Chancay port), announced that starting in March, its Asia-South America route will no longer stop at Lirquén Port in Chile's Biobío Region. Instead, the company will launch a feeder service from Chancay to supply Lirquén and San Antonio before resuming operations in Peru (Chancay and Callao).

— How does the Peruvian government view the launch of the Chancay megaport?

"This infrastructure puts us in a more competitive position in the region. Asia-Pacific is a crucial global market, and this project provides us with greater access while adding value to our resources and trade opportunities. We are beginning to see significant logistical advancements that are boosting our economy."

— How does this position Peru within the region?

"This is a strategic infrastructure project for Peru, fueling expectations for our regional potential. We are experiencing sustainable growth and seeking measures for economic integration. This development puts us in the global spotlight as we explore further growth opportunities."

— Chile is already seeing the effects of Chancay on shipping routes. How does this position Peru in relation to Chile?

"There will always be room for growth for both countries. We must take a broader perspective on South America's opportunities and focus on the benefits of strong economic ties between our nations."

"Chile has significant investments in Peru, and this is the time to explore growth as a united South American bloc. This is an opportunity to integrate Chile, Ecuador, and even Brazil. We should focus on capitalizing on the new opportunities in this globalized world."

### **Foreign Fishing Fleets**

In recent years, monitoring of foreign fishing vessels—many from China—has intensified. These vessels travel annually from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, navigating through Chile's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and protected marine areas where fishing is prohibited.

Peru and Ecuador have reported similar incidents.

In October last year, Peruvian fishing associations reported that Chinese vessels were illegally extracting pota (known as jumbo flying squid in Chile), allegedly causing shortages in Peruvian waters. In response, Peru's Ministry of Production issued a Supreme Decree to enhance monitoring and control of foreign fishing vessels operating in Peruvian waters.

At the time, Barrientos denied that the pota shortage was linked to Chinese fleets, according to Peruvian media outlet La República.

— Chile has raised concerns over the presence of foreign fleets near its EEZ. What is Peru's stance on this issue?

"Foreign-flagged vessels remain outside the 200-mile EEZ boundaries, but we must form a united front against illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Peru is also tackling this issue. In October, we introduced new regulations to tighten oversight and reduce flexibility in access control. Ensuring regulated access to EEZs is crucial to prevent unmonitored resource extraction."

"We are pushing for a coordinated effort between Ecuador, Peru, and Chile to establish similar measures that strengthen our sovereignty and protect our marine resources."

— Have you discussed this matter with Chilean officials?

"Yes, we addressed it with Chile's Undersecretary of Fisheries, Julio Salas, in January. I also hope to speak with Ecuadorian authorities on this issue."

— In Chile, the government has suggested allowing industrial fishing operations beyond the EEZ. What is your view?

"It is a challenge for our countries to expand operations into international waters while maintaining sustainable practices. In Peru, we have a highly productive marine zone close to our shores. However, climate change is signaling that we must explore new fishing grounds and optimize production."

— Would Peru consider fishing beyond the 200-mile EEZ?

"To remain competitive, absolutely. Being proactive and looking ahead is essential. Chile is a leader in aquaculture and fisheries, and we must keep up with industry advancements."

— Some Chilean industry stakeholders criticized this idea. Do you think it is viable?

"It is not an unfeasible idea, but it does require investment and incentives. In Peru, this is not an immediate priority, but it is something we need to consider in the long term."

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**"The Chancay Megaport Raises Our Regional Standing and Puts Us on the Global Stage"**

"We are working toward a unified front with Ecuador and Chile, aligning policies to strengthen our sovereignty and marine conservation efforts."

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## **Peru Aims to Fully Exploit Maritime Zone Gained from Chile in The Hague Ruling**

— A decade after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling that awarded Peru over 50,000 square kilometers of maritime territory, how is this zone being utilized?

"It is a highly productive area but remains largely untapped. We face a major challenge in enhancing fishing infrastructure in the south, particularly in improving artisanal fishing ports that currently have logistical constraints. Strengthening this infrastructure is crucial for expanding our fishing operations."

— Does this ruling give Peru a competitive edge over Chile?

"I wouldn't call it an advantage, but rather an opportunity to increase extraction and production. However, we still need to develop the necessary fleet capabilities and logistical frameworks."

— Once infrastructure improvements are made, would it provide Peru with an edge?

"It would create greater potential for industry growth. Southern Peru—from Arequipa to Tacna—has huge development potential, unlike the well-established Tumbes-Ica region. Our challenge is to boost productivity in the south, requiring investment in infrastructure and fleets. We are actively discussing strategies with the industry."

"Our seas are highly productive but also highly variable. We must make strategic decisions at the right time."