



Release: Liberia Losing Millions in Mining Revenue, Undermining Communities, Forests, and the Government's Development and Climate Goals

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Monrovia, Liberia, 27 March 2026 — A new report, *[A Rapid Assessment of Liberia's Mining Sector, with a Focus on the Local Impacts on Forests and People](#)*, finds that the Government of Liberia could be losing millions of dollars in mining revenue yearly, while communities miss out on promised benefits and environmental damage continues to rise.

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The Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) reports that from 2007 to 2023, mining companies paid over US\$844 million to the Government of Liberia. However, this revenue appears low relative to the scale of exports: importing countries report US\$7.8 billion in Liberian mineral imports, primarily gold and iron ore—a full US\$2.7 billion (43%) *more* than Liberia recorded as exports (see page 60 of the report for more details). These gaps point to potential smuggling and underreporting (e.g., fraudulent transfer pricing) to evade taxes. A lack of verifiable reporting by the Government of Liberia and mining companies makes it difficult to determine the full scope of the problem.

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Similarly, host communities are not receiving their rightful financial benefits; in fact, they seem to be losing millions of dollars as well. Under Mineral Development Agreements, large (Class A) mining companies should have paid more than US\$173 million to affected communities by 2023. At most, though, only US\$119 million was paid, with another US\$12 million provided '*in kind*', but the communities have not even received this amount. Instead, the Government has required payments to be made to the counties rather than to the dedicated funds for the communities most affected by the mining. Also concerning, the General Auditing Commission's latest audit (2021) of these payments uncovered gross violations and a lack of oversight by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Further, each year, mining companies with Exploration Licenses are required to spend at least two percent of their budgets "*on the construction, maintenance or rehabilitation of schools or clinics within their license area.*" There is no report on whether this requirement is being met.

Lost revenue and missing payments are not the only problems the assessment uncovered, as environmental impacts are also intensifying. The assessment finds that direct deforestation linked to mining, poor handling of hazardous chemicals, and water pollution is reaching alarming levels, while resources for monitoring and enforcement seem to be inadequate.

In May 2025, the Environmental Protection Agency identified widespread violations during a nationwide environmental monitoring and compliance effort. More recently, in early 2026, the Associated Press reported that Liberia's largest gold miner, Bea Mountain Mining Corporation, "repeatedly spilled dangerous chemicals." Despite the EPA's efforts to enforce the laws and

regulations, the alarming scale of the problem underscores the need for additional resources to enable the EPA to intensify monitoring and enforcement.

Mining licenses now overlap more than 2 million hectares of forest across the country. Yet even this underestimates the full extent of the mining sector's environmental footprint because the Ministry of Mines and Energy does not report on artisanal or unlicensed mining, both of which appear widespread.

The report further highlights growing tensions between companies and locals over mining's encroachment on community forest areas, a troubling issue that, left unchecked, could degenerate into serious violence, legal disputes, and instability.

The rapid assessment concludes that the sector is undermining Liberia's conservation strategy, as areas proposed for protection are being carved up to make way for more mining. This challenges Liberia's national and international obligations to protect 30 percent of its land area by 2030 and its ability to meet its climate change mitigation goals, including reducing its deforestation rate by 10 percent.

A Call for Action

Liberia's mining sector has the potential to drive economic growth, but only if governance keeps pace with extraction. The assessment identifies a clear path forward:

- Strengthen transparency and reconcile trade and revenue data
- Enforce existing legal obligations to communities
- Close gaps in tax collection and revenue capture
- Increase resources for environmental monitoring and enforcement
- Develop a national land-use plan to reduce conflicts between mining, forests, and communities

With targeted reforms, Liberia can begin to capture greater value from its resources while safeguarding its forests and communities.

Download the full report, *A Rapid Assessment of Liberia's Mining Sector, with a Focus on the Local Impacts on Forests and People.*

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Forest Trends works to conserve forests and other ecosystems through the creation and wide adoption of a broad range of environmental finance, markets, and other payment and incentive mechanisms.

Forest Trends' Forest Policy, Trade, and Finance Initiative aims to promote policies which harness the power of market incentives for the legal, sustainable, and equitable trade in timber and other commodities harvested from forest landscapes.

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