

Argentina court upholds glacier protections against mining

July 4 2012



The Upsala Glacier, located on the eastern side of the Southern Patagonian Icefield, pictured in 2009 in this photo courtesy of the NASA Earth Observatory, has experienced significant retreat over the past century. Argentina's supreme court has upheld key articles of a law aimed at protecting glaciers, despite a legal challenge from mining companies, including Canadian giant Barrick Gold.

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The high court annulled the injunctions requested by the mining companies, with the official judicial news agency saying that "the law remains in force, and the inventory of [glaciers](#), among other issues, should proceed."

The law "aims to preserve the glaciers and the environment surrounding them as a reserve of water resources for [human consumption](#) (and) for agriculture," it added.

Adopted in September 2010, the law forbids mining activity on glaciers and the area surrounding them along the 5,000-kilometer (3,100-mile) border with Chile.

A similar law passed in 2008 but was vetoed by President Cristina Kirchner.

The huge Pascua Lama gold and silver deposit straddles the Argentina and Chile border. Production is expected to begin in 2013.

Barrick Gold has said it plans to invest \$3 billion over 25 years of exploiting the gold deposit, one of the biggest untapped [gold mines](#) in the world.

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