

Clarín 13-07-09

After the emanations, Entre Ríos will install an observatory opposite to Botnia

It will be located in the Ines Island, in front of the pulp mill. It will receive advice from the Secretariat of the Environment. The assembly members called for a protest rally for next Sunday, to repudiate the event.

As a consequence of the unusual and dense smoke, with strong sulphur odours that occurred last Saturday at the Botnia plant, the government of Entre Ríos will install a permanent observatory in Ines Island, located on the Argentine coast just opposite the Finnish pulp mill.

Through the Secretariat of the Environment of the province, some months ago the government took possession of said island, where initially the assembly members had located a rudimentary observation post. Now, making use of its strategic location, the administration of Governor Sergio Urribarri will place a game warden or park ranger, nature conservation agents and ad hoc gear, which will be working with the support of the National Secretariat of the Environment.

After Saturday's episode, Urribarri talked with the Secretary of the Environment, Fernando Raffo, and the Mayor of Gualeguaychú, Juan José Bahillo. According to Raffo, the government is alert and concerned about the possibility that events such as these, that carry an important load of aerial contaminants in the smoke, "repeat themselves with a higher frequency". "We absolutely reject any situation that may imply risk for the environment and for public health. We see with concern the repetition of these odours and stains in the River Uruguay" he added.

On the other hand, the Red Uruguay (Uruguayan Network) against the cellulose plants and the monoculture plantations of eucalyptus demanded "the immediate expulsion" of Botnia. And it also asked for not authorising building other projected pulp mills in the future.

The Citizens' Environmental Assembly of Gualeguaychú summoned a protest rally towards the San Martín Bridge for Sunday 19. Mayor Bahillo pointed out that Saturday's episode "makes evident what was being denounced and which are the fears of the community" of Gualeguaychú. He said that the Environmental Surveillance Plan implemented by the National Secretariat of the Environment has mobile and fixed posts in the area, to which the Ines Island station will be added.

Reported by Veronica Toller, from Gualeguaychú.