

**PIMA COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**



**RESPONSE TO COMMENTS  
FOR  
THE PROPOSED AIR QUALITY OPERATING PERMIT  
FOR  
ASARCO MISSION COMPLEX  
4201 W. PIMA MINE ROAD  
SAHUARITA, ARIZONA 85629**

**JANUARY 18, 2013**

## **Introduction**

The ASARCO Mission Complex (ASARCO) is an open pit copper mine. Approximately 54,000 tons of copper ore are extracted each day. The ore is crushed, ground and concentrated using the conventional froth flotation method. The final product is a copper concentrate which is shipped off-site for smelting.

The facility currently operates 24 hours per day, 365 days per year except during periods of preventative maintenance, shutdown or repair of equipment. The emission sources at the facility include fugitive emissions from mining and mineral processing and regulated pollutants generated from fuel-fired equipment.

On December 13, 2007, ASARCO submitted a renewal application for their facility. The application was found administratively complete on June 13, 2008.

## **Public Participation**

Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (PDEQ) published notice of its intention to issue an air quality operating permit to ASARCO, on October 1, and on October 8, 2012. On September 27, 2012, the public was also informed that an open house and public hearing would be held. The open house was held at two locations on consecutive days - Wednesday, November 7, 2012, at the Rancho Resort Clubhouse and on Thursday November 8, 2012, at the Green Valley Library. The public hearing was conducted on Tuesday, November 27, 2012, from 5:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. at the Rancho Resort Clubhouse. In addition, PDEQ issued news releases on October 1 and October 8, 2012, to publicize the meetings. The news releases generated stories on the local TV news and in the Arizona Daily Star, as well as other news media.

Public notices were prepared and submitted to local newspapers for publication. The Arizona Daily Star and the Daily Territorial are the two newspapers PDEQ uses to publish notices. Information was also available on the PDEQ website and included all documents received by the department from application submittal up to and including the proposed permit and technical support documents.

During the 60-day public comment period, PDEQ received 5 written and 8 oral comments. In addition, PDEQ received a comment letter that was mailed after the public comment period closed on December 6, 2012. This comment letter is included in this response to comment document. Comments ranged from requesting an additional air monitoring station to stricter controls on preventing fugitive dust. PDEQ addresses each of these comments.

PDEQ appreciates the public input and would like to extend its thanks to the community for all comments received during the public comment period and at the public hearing.

## Summary of Changes Made to the Proposed Final Renewal Permit

The renewal permit has been restructured to correspond with the facility's unit operations. These unit operations are numbered as sections in the permit. Each section identifies the emission units and their corresponding regulatory standards.

The development of this renewal permit also brought about enhancements and changes in ASARCO's preventative actions and contingency measures to control fugitive dust emissions. The development of a comprehensive Tailings Management Plan is now specified in the renewal permit to prevent fugitive dust emissions from the ASARCO tailings.

## Response to Comments

### Written Comments

This summary presents PDEQ responses to written comments received during the 60-day public comment period.

1. **Steve – Tucson, AZ**

Written Comment. E-mail dated November 14, 2012

*After reviewing the information provided during the recent open house at Rancho Resort and the PDEQ website, I have one overwhelming concern. The location of monitoring stations to provide continuous oversight of the ASARCO Mission Complex tailings pits #'s 7 and 8 is totally inadequate. The monitoring station which (presumably) monitors air quality from these locations is #10 and it is situated approximately 7-8 miles south of these pits (near the Pima County complex at La Canada and Desert Bell roads). With prevailing winds and, generally, high winds out of the southwest, this monitoring site does nothing to monitor air quality conditions for the entirety of Sahuarita. There is no monitoring station geographically placed which can provide even minimal monitorship. This then requires citizens to report telephonically or otherwise to PDEQ when dust conditions are observed. Unfortunately, this rarely happens unless the conditions become so bad that residents affected are driven to take some action.*

### PDEQ Response

PDEQ operates and locates the air monitoring stations in our Air Quality Monitoring Network according to U.S. EPA criteria. The current network exceeds the EPA requirements for the number of air monitoring stations for the Eastern Pima County/Tucson Air Planning Area. The intent of the ambient air monitoring network is to measure the amount of air pollution people are exposed to in their community.

Monitors for particulate matter that is 10 microns or less (PM10) and 2.5 microns or less (PM2.5) are already located in the Green Valley area. Due to limitations in funding and staffing, PDEQ is not able to establish a new air monitoring station in Sahuarita. In

addition, the results from an ambient air monitor are difficult to attribute to a specific source and subsequently use for enforcement purposes. Elevated values would be an indication of overall air quality throughout the airshed, not an indication that a specific source was in violation of permit conditions.

The current up-to-the-hour particulate monitoring data available from the Green Valley air monitoring station is combined with regular inspector surveillance, monitoring of weather conditions, rapid response to complaints, and enforcement of permitting requirements to reduce incidents of excessive dust at the ASARCO Mine.

The renewal permit continues to reinforce ASARCO's obligations to comply with the local and federally enforceable reporting conditions. Such reporting conditions include excess emissions and permit deviations. Historical enforcement action has resulted in PDEQ seeking changes in operational procedures to improve environmental compliance.

2. **Ronald J. Spriegel & Alene R. Spriegel – Tucson, AZ**

Written Comment. E-mail dated November 14, 2012

*We are very concerned about the air and water quality permitting mining in the area... a few years ago the mines were not following rules, and had to clean up our neighborhood, and their tailings blew into our homes.*

*We still see a lot of dust, and other materials rising, and blowing around they control better, not totally, are adding layers to the top of the tailing piles, and don.t [sic] always control their leavings right away...*

*Please make the rules TOUGH, and make them follow them... we breath [sic] the air, they pollute. Less pollution is better.*

**PDEQ Response**

ASARCO must continue to demonstrate environmental awareness and assure compliance with air quality regulations. Furthermore, supplemental control measures have been added to the renewal air quality operating permit to control emissions from the tailings.

3. **Cynthia Kloss – Tucson, AZ**

Written Comment received at Public Hearing on November 27, 2012

*Pls discuss frequency, details & results of monitoring dust along North Rancho Resort.*

## **PDEQ Response**

PDEQ does not have an air monitoring station along North Rancho Resort. However, PDEQ conducts frequent off-site surveillance of the tailings and also conducts onsite inspections of the surface of the tailings. The off-site inspections consist of conducting surveillance of the tailings along La Canada, and Helmet Peak roads. Inspectors observe the tailings from within Rancho Resort including S. Avenida Tecodoro and W. Via Cerro Colorado roads. Inspectors will stop at various points within Rancho Resort and take wind speed measurements and observe wind direction. Inspectors look for fugitive dust emissions, if fugitive emissions are observed inspectors note duration of fugitive emission plume and, if possible, opacity. If the opacity of fugitive emissions appears instantaneously over 20% or if fugitive emissions are observed crossing the property boundary, inspectors will proceed with an onsite inspection at the ASARCO Mine. During the onsite inspection, inspector(s) will observe the surface of the tailings where fugitive emissions were seen during the off-site portion of the inspection. Inspection of the surface of the tailings includes observations from the top of the berm. Inspectors note the presence of surface moisture and/or other means of surface stabilization. Inspectors document observations with photographs during all phases of inspection.

### 4. **Eileen Belove**

Written Comment received at Public Hearing on November 27, 2012

*There are seven schools here in Sahuarita with children playing outdoors – are they doomed to illness growing up here in Sahuarita? There is another school in Amado called Sappori [sic]. Please consider families and their health who live here. Retired people have compromised immune systems. Older people cannot handle this much pollution. There is a lot of illness here with respiratory diseases. We feel we are suffering allergies all the time! EB.*

## **PDEQ Response**

PDEQ acknowledges your concerns and is sensitive to the potential impact this emission source can have on the community. PDEQ evaluates the potential for pollution that can affect the general population as well as sensitive groups including children, the elderly, and those with respiratory or cardiovascular health issues. If pollution levels are forecast to approach air quality health standards, PDEQ issues a health advisory to local media, schools, and other interested parties.

Interested parties can be added to the advisory e-mail notification list via the PDEQ website at <http://www.deq.pima.gov/air/AirAlerts.html>.

In reviewing the renewal application for the facility, PDEQ evaluates the application on the merits of ASARCO complying with established federal, state and local air quality regulations. ASARCO has demonstrated that it meets the requirements for PDEQ to issue the renewal permit. PDEQ has incorporated a comprehensive Tailings Management

Plan with this renewal that is required to be reviewed annually to determine its effectiveness.

5. **Vern Butler**

Written Comment received at Public Hearing on November 27, 2012

*During extreme windy conditions, fugitive emissions from these tailing dams, No. 7 and No. 8, have impacted our community.*

*Part B, Section A, Mine Activities is the section that covers fugitive emissions. I believe this section as written, provides adequate protection recognizing the inherent problems dealing with nature's variables - temperatures, precipitation and wind. Section 8 requires the mine to submit a Tailings Management Plan. I assume such a plan has been submitted in the past. It is this plan that defines a process by which the tailings will be laid down and fugitive emissions controlled to the extent possible.*

*I also notice that the opacity requirement shall not exceed 20% as measured by standard means. (I.C.1.d). This seems to be a reasonable standard but there will be times when it will be exceeded. In fact, the regulations I.C.2.b, allows the above standard to be exceeded when the wind speed exceeds 25 miles per hour. Is this the right exclusion?*

*I believe the mine should be commended for showing a willingness to modify its processes in installing and operating the tailings dams near Rancho Resort. Such modifications have, in my view, greatly reduced the frequency and intensity of dust problems at Rancho Resort. The mines should have further flexibility to modify its Tailings Management Plan to incorporate new techniques and processes that will reduce fugitive emissions.*

*It is recommended that a monitoring station be established at the corner of La Canada and West Sahuarita Road, adjacent to Rancho Resort. Since ASARCO has paid the PDEQ of a little less than a million dollars recently, some of that money should go towards establishing such an air quality monitoring station.*

*Thank you.*

**PDEQ Response**

PDEQ appreciates your feedback on the proposed air quality operating permit. The renewal permit identifies all established environmental local, state and federal regulations to maintain and protect the existing air quality.

With regard to your question with the applicability of the opacity standard when wind speeds exceed 25 mph PDEQ provides the following: Pima County Code (PCC) 17.16.050.B does not allow an emission from any nonpoint source to exceed 20% opacity at any time using Arizona Testing Reference Method 9. There is no exception to this standard with respect to wind speed. PCC 17.16.050.D does not allow fugitive dust beyond the property line without taking reasonably necessary and feasible precautions.

This subsection (PCC 17.16.050.D only) does not apply when wind speeds exceed 25 mph and control measures were taken commensurate with the size and scope of the emission source.

In order to ensure ASARCO takes proactive measures to control fugitive dust emissions from the tailings, ASARCO is required through the renewal permit to develop a Tailings Management Plan. The Tailings Management Plan must be approved by PDEQ, and the plan allows for flexibility of optimum dust control measures in coordination with mining operations. Any changes to ASARCO's Tailings Management Plan must be approved by PDEQ prior to implementation.

With regard to placing an air monitoring station at the corner of La Canada and West Sahuarita Road, PDEQ monitors are already located in the Green Valley area. Due to limitations in funding and staffing, PDEQ is not able to establish a new air monitoring station in Sahuarita. In addition, the results from an ambient air monitor are difficult to attribute to a specific source and subsequently use for enforcement purposes.

In 2010, PDEQ entered into a settlement agreement with ASARCO for fugitive emissions from their tailings. The agreement consisted of \$100,000 civil penalty, that covered the cost of the enforcement actions for PDEQ, and a U.S. EPA approved Supplemental Environmental Project totaling \$350,000 for environmental restoration of the Canoa Ranch Conservation Park. At this time there is no additional funding for a new air monitoring station.

### **Public Hearing Oral Comments November 27, 2012**

The following summary presents PDEQ's responses to oral comments received at the public hearing held on November 27, 2012. A summary of the oral comments follows identification of the speaker. Please refer to the ASARCO Public Hearing Transcript for the full transcription of each speaker's comments.

#### **1. Speaker 1 – Paul Williams**

*I believe that the County, all of us, need to be involved in making sure that ASARCO and McMoRan do their jobs and conform to the minimum requirements of the law.*

*As far as monitoring is concerned, my understanding is that there is a monitoring device and that monitoring device is quite a distance from here, and for me, I would like to know more about the monitoring device, the technology involved, who operates it, who owns it, and if it's effective, why not more, why not put more in more strategic locations so that the air quality can be monitored and, possibly, the ability to prevent another disaster from happening. Thank you.*

## **Pima County Response**

PDEQ locates and operates air monitoring stations in our Air Quality Monitoring Network according to U.S. EPA criteria. The intent of the ambient air monitoring network is to measure the amount of air pollution people are exposed to in their community. All air monitoring networks are constrained by available resources, so every effort is made to establish air monitoring stations in locations that provide the best representation of local populations, that monitor appropriate pollutants using appropriate methodologies, and stay within funding constraints. The current PDEQ network exceeds the EPA requirements for the number of air monitoring stations for the Eastern Pima County/Tucson Air Planning Area.

Monitoring for particulate matter in the Green Valley area has been ongoing since 1989. In 1999, a major improvement was realized using a one-time Federal grant to install a new air monitoring station to the north of the original air monitoring station, in a more central part of Green Valley. The original every sixth day PM10 (particulate matter that is 10 microns or less) sampler was replaced with a Beta Attenuation Mass Monitor that provided concentration readings every hour. Using the same grant funding, PDEQ initiated a website that provided Green Valley area residents with access to hourly PM10 concentration data, as well as hourly ozone and meteorological data. A PM2.5 (2.5 microns or less) Beta Attenuation Mass Monitor was added several years later, providing a comprehensive, representative and appropriately sited and equipped air monitoring station.

Intent and purpose of air monitoring stations is also regulated according to U.S. EPA criteria. In addition, the results from an ambient air monitor are difficult to attribute to a specific source and subsequently use for enforcement purposes. Elevated values would be an indication of overall air quality throughout the airshed, not an indication that a specific source was in violation of permit conditions. A wind event of sufficient magnitude to raise dust from one facility would have a similar impact on a neighboring facility, thus an air monitoring station in the vicinity of both facilities provides areal representation, and complies with U.S. EPA criteria.

The current up-to-the-hour particulate monitoring data available from the Green Valley air monitoring station is combined with regular inspector surveillance, monitoring of weather conditions, rapid response to complaints, and enforcement of permitting requirements to reduce incidents of excessive dust at the ASARCO Mine.

## 2. **Speaker 2 – Vern Butler**

*Mr. Butler read his written comments provided in Written Comment Number 5 above.*

## **PDEQ Response**

See PDEQ Response to Written Comment Number 5 above.

3. **Speaker 3 – Steven Bell**

*What we have been able to determine, that the monitoring station, the only monitoring station, for ASARCO, in this part of the world, south of Tucson, is the one that's about 8 miles south of here in Green Valley near the library. That is just totally inadequate and if that's the case, and from PDEQ's own website, that appears to be the case, that needs to be changed. We need, in addition to that one, we need one closer whether it is out here at the corner of Sahuarita Rita Road, or La Canada, or right over here in the desert next to Rancho Resort. If we have a 24-hour a day, 365 day a year monitoring station, it will do the job that it needs to do or at least, we hope it will. But I do appreciate ASARCO's improvement.*

**PDEQ Response**

See PDEQ response to monitoring comments: Written Comment Numbers 1, 3, 4 & 5 and Oral Comment Number 1.

4. **Speaker 4 – Eileen Belove**

*I would like to say that our health has been affected by this dust and that many people have problems now with their health because of this dust and I feel that we are not getting a 50/50 chance with ASARCO. I think their rights to business has become more important than our rights to live here. And I'm upset about that even though they might have taken precautions since the last fiasco; we are still suffering from excessive dust. So, I feel that they had better put a station closer to us so that we get true readings and we get just as much consideration as ASARCO. Thank you*

**PDEQ Response**

PDEQ acknowledges community concerns regarding ASARCO. Pursuant to Federal, State, and County regulations, PDEQ is legally obligated to issue the air quality permit to ASARCO when the source shows that it is designed, controlled, and equipped with air pollution control equipment in compliance with all applicable regulations.

In reviewing the renewal application for the facility, PDEQ evaluates the application on the merits of ASARCO complying with established federal, state and local air quality regulations. ASARCO has demonstrated that it meets the requirements for PDEQ to issue the renewal permit. With this renewal, PDEQ requires ASARCO to develop a Tailings Management Plan. ASARCO must evaluate the Tailings Management Plan annually to determine its effectiveness and submit a written evaluation to PDEQ.

With regard to an air monitoring station closer to the Rancho Resort please see PDEQ response to monitoring comments: Written Comment Numbers 1, 3, 4 & 5 and Oral Comment Number 1.

5. **Speaker 5 – Elaine Wood**

*I have sent them (PDEQ), on numerous occasions, photos; I e-mail them. I usually catch it driving down, driving west on Sahuarita Road and then I will get out of my car and take the pictures and several times you can't even see them west of Sahuarita Road. I encourage you all to be vigilant and maybe make a phone call when you see this happening. I was just curious why they couldn't fill in the mines after they are finished and be easier to keep the dust down. Thanks*

**PDEQ Response**

PDEQ appreciates your diligence on reporting possible dust problems and encourages the community to submit complaints to PDEQ via phone at 520-243-7400 or PDEQ website at [www.deq.pima.gov](http://www.deq.pima.gov). PDEQ does send inspectors out to investigate in response to such reports.

With regard to filling the mines in after mining is completed, the State Mine Inspector's Office is responsible for the physical safety of the site (such as stability of closed tailings impoundments and underground shafts). Detailed assessments of conditions during operations and the predicted post-closure conditions are required for a closure permit. Closure plans are required as part of the approval to operate and include estimates of closure costs as well as financial assurance. More information can be found at <http://www.asmi.state.az.us/>

6. **Speaker 6 – Katherine Davin**

*A year ago, I was diagnosed with COPD. Can't go anywhere without my oxygen. Doctor says, "You must have been a smoker." I said, "Smoker? I'm not a smoker." She said, "Well, it's environmental." So, that's kind of a personnel story, can't go anywhere without oxygen and this all started when that nasty thing happened to us... I will say ASARCO was a good neighbor but still the dust is flying and we need to just get some suppression on that and perhaps the monitor that they are talking about placed here would help us, but the mine is operating and the dust is flying and some of us are suffering.*

**PDEQ Response**

PDEQ conducts surveillance inspections as well as joint inspections with U.S. EPA to ensure compliance with air quality regulations and the air quality permit. Unfortunately, there have been times when ASARCO had failed to comply with air quality regulations. In those instances, PDEQ has taken enforcement actions including assessment of civil penalties, as a deterrent to non-compliance. PDEQ will continue to uphold air quality regulations to protect public health and the environment in the future.

7. **Speaker 7 – Jack Belove**

*About 3 weeks ago, we were coming west on Sahuarita Road and saw a cloud coming off the mine to the south of us. And it looked just like the one that hit about 3 years ago. I don't know whether ASARCO did anything.*

**PDEQ Response**

On November 8, 2012, PDEQ received a complaint regarding dust from the ASARCO tailings. An inspector responded to the complaint and conducted surveillance of the tailings, and observed berm building at tailings dam #7. No emissions or violations were observed at that time. PDEQ encourages the community to submit complaints via phone or PDEQ website, including photos if possible.

8. **Speaker 8 – Eileen Belove**

*I would like to say that there are 7 schools here in Sahuarita with children playing outdoors. Please consider families, and their health, who live here in Sahuarita. Retired people have compromised immune systems and cannot handle this much pollution. There is a lot of illness here with respiratory diseases and we feel we are suffering allergies all the time and taking allergy medicines all the time. Thank you very much.*

**PDEQ Response**

See PDEQ response to Written Comment Number 4.

**Written Comment Received After the Close of the 60-day Public Comment Period**

PDEQ received one comment after the close of the 60-day Public Comment Period. The following presents PDEQ's response to that comment.

**Farhad Moghimi, P.E., Assistant Town Manager / Town Engineer – Sahuarita, AZ**

Written Comment dated December 3, 2012

*Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the ASARCO Mission Complex Air Quality Permit Renewal Application and the PDEQ Proposed Permit. The Town has received concerns from area residents regarding the location of the existing monitoring station relative to the mining activities, observed wind direction, and residential /commercial areas within the Town of Sahuarita.*

*The existing Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (PDEQ) monitoring site is located about 1.5 miles south of the the [sic] Town of Sahuarita and about 5 miles south of the ASARCO Mission Complex activities presented in the Proposed Permit. Specifically, the PDEQ monitoring site is located in Green Valley, 100 meters west of La*

*Canada and 0.5 kilometers west of Interstate 19 (source: PDEQ Website). While the Proposed Permit provides measures to ensure the facility controls fugitive particulate matter and assures compliance is maintained through compliance assurance monitoring (CAM) plans for specific emission units, that monitoring is done by the permit holder. The lack of a PDEQ monitoring site in Sahuarita fails to monitor the population exposure to a significant source of airborne particulates. Such a site should be operated and maintained by PDEQ.*

*The installation of a monitoring station that considers the location of mining activities covered by the Proposed Permit, prevailing wind direction and residential /commercial areas within the Town of Sahuarita would provide ongoing monitoring by PDEQ and would enable the public to access real-time air quality information through the PDEQ Info Now webpage. Costs associated with the installation and monitoring of such a station should be borne by ASARCO as a requirement of the Permit Renewal.*

*We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed permit and we appreciate your ongoing efforts to improve and protect air quality throughout Pima County.*

### **PDEQ Response**

Please see PDEQ response to monitoring comments: Written Comment Numbers 1, 3, 4 & 5 and Oral Comment Number 1.

The Town of Sahuarita believes that ASARCO should fund the cost associated with installation and operation of a new air monitoring station in Sahuarita. Pima County Code does not provide PDEQ the authority to require a source to fund off-site air quality monitoring.

### **Conclusion**

PDEQ appreciates the participation of the general public during this permit renewal process. Your comments during this renewal process and PDEQ's regulation of the facility, as well as ASARCO's willingness to work with the department have led to a more comprehensive renewal permit.

From: [REDACTED]  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]  
Subject: ASARCO Mission Complex Permit Renewal  
Date: Wednesday, November 14, 2012 9:49:11 AM

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After reviewing the information provided during the recent open house at Rancho Resort and the PDEQ website, I have one overwhelming concern. The location of monitoring stations to provide continuous oversight of the ASARCO Mission tailings pits #'s 7 and 8 is totally inadequate. The monitoring station which (presumably) monitors air quality from these locations is #10 and it is situated approximately 7-8 miles south of these pits (near the Pima county complex at La Canada and Desert Bell roads). With prevailing winds and, generally, high winds out of the **southwest**, this monitoring site does nothing to monitor air quality conditions for the entirety of Sahuarita. There is no monitoring station geographically placed which can provide even minimal monitorship. This then requires citizens to report telephonically or otherwise to PDEQ when dust conditions are observed. Unfortunately, this rarely happens unless the conditions become so bad that residents affected are driven to take some action.

The permitting process should require ASARCO to assist in underwriting the cost of a monitor location which adequately protects Sahuarita and its citizens.

From: [REDACTED]  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: asarco mines  
Date: Saturday, November 24, 2012 10:48:06 AM

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We are very concerned about the air and water quality permitting mining in the area... a few years ago the mines were not following rules, and had to clean up our neighborhood, and their tailings blew into our homes... We still see a lot of dust, and other materials rising, and blowing around.. they control better, not totally, are adding layers to the top of the tailing piles, and don.t always control their leavings right away... Please make the rules TOUGH, and make them follow them... we breath the air, they pollute. Less pollution is better.

Thank you,  
Ronald J Spriegel  
Alene R Spriegel



**ASARCO LLC (Mission Complex)  
Proposed Air Quality Permit Comment Card**

**Note:** PDEQ will review all comments received during the public comment period, open houses and hearings, including oral and written comments.

In order to be notified of actions related to the ASARCO, LLC (Mission Complex) Air Quality Permit renewal or appeal the permit decision, your name and address must be provided as required under state law.

Date: 11/27/12

Name: CUNTHLET KROSS

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Phone Number: [REDACTED]

Mailing Address: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SAHUARITA

**COMMENTS:**

*Pls discuss frequency, details, & results of monitoring dust along NORTH Rancho RESORT.*



**ASARCO LLC (Mission Complex)  
Proposed Air Quality Permit Comment Card**

**Note:** PDEQ will review all comments received during the public comment period, open houses and hearings, including oral and written comments.

In order to be notified of actions related to the ASARCO, LLC (Mission Complex) Air Quality Permit renewal or appeal the permit decision, your name and address must be provided as required under state law.

Date: 11/27/2012 *sr.*

Name: Eileen Belove

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Phone Number: [REDACTED]

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMENTS:**

*There are 7 schools here in Sahuarita with children playing out-doors - are they doomed to illness growing up here in Sahuarita? There is another school in Amado called Sappari. Please consider families & their health who live here. Retired people have compromised immune systems*

Older people cannot handle  
this much pollution. There is  
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we are suffering allergies  
all the time!

EB

VERN BUTLER

SPEAKER #2

November 27, 2012

Mukonde Chama  
Pima County Department of Environmental Quality  
33 N Stone Ave., Suite 700  
Tucson, AZ 85701-1439

Dear Mr. Chama,

I would like to submit the following comments on the Proposed Air Quality Permit for the ASARCO LLC Mission Complex.

As a resident of Rancho Resort I, and most of my neighbors, have a direct interest in the proposed air quality permit for the Mission Mine. Our 365 houses lie within a quarter to a half mile of two of the mine's tailing dams. During extreme windy conditions fugitive emissions from these tailing dams, #7 and #8, have impacted our community. Emissions from other parts of the mine complex have little or no impact on us, so I will address only those parts of the proposed permit that cover the fugitive emissions from TDAMS 7&8.

Part B, Section 8, Mine Activities is the section that covers fugitive emissions. I believe this section as written provides adequate protection recognizing the inherent problems dealing with nature's variables – temperatures, precipitation and wind. Section 8 requires the mine to submit a "Tailings Management Plan". I assume such a Plan has been submitted in the past. It is this plan that defines the process by which the tailings will be laid down and fugitive emissions controlled to the extent possible. I certainly do not have the technical expertise to review and evaluate such a plan but I would hope that the PDEQ has that expertise or at least can hire such expertise. I would suggest that a wide range of alternative processes be allowed in order to adapt the best possible solution to the fugitive dust issues. The goal should be to reduce fugitive emissions as much as possible.

I also notice that the opacity requirement shall not exceed 20% as measured by standard means. (i.c.i.d) This seems to be a reasonable standard but there will be times when it is exceeded. In fact the regulation (1.C.2.a) allows the above standard to be exceeded when the wind speed exceeds 25 mph. Is this the right exclusion? I don't know, but I do know that the wind will exceed 25 mph at some time or times during the year. If the mine has met all other fugitive emissions regulations and follows a good Tailings Management Plan the impacts of the extreme wind conditions should be minimized.

I believe the mine should be commended for showing a willingness to modify its processes in installing and operating the tailings dams near Rancho Resort. Such modifications have, in my view, greatly reduced the frequency and intensity of dust problems at Rancho Resort. The mine should have further flexibility to modify its Tailings Management Plan to incorporate new techniques and processes that will reduce fugitive emissions.

I also believe that further monitoring of fugitive emissions is required. The current monitoring station at La Canada and Desert Bell Road in Green Valley does not accurately measure fugitive emissions from

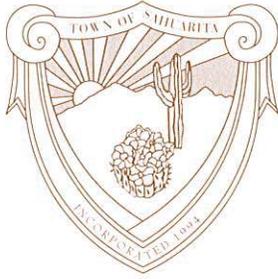
ASARCO operations, especially tailing dams 7 & 8. It is recommended that a monitoring station be established at the corner of La Canada and W Sahuarita Road adjacent to Rancho Resort. Since ASARCO paid a fine to the PDEQ of a little less than half a million dollars recently some of that money should go toward establishing such an air quality monitoring station.

Sincerely



Vern W Butler

  
Sahuarita, AZ 85629



# Town of Sahuarita

## Public Works Department

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December 3, 2012

Karen Wilhelmsen  
Pima County Department of Environmental Quality  
33 N. Stone Avenue, Suite 700  
Tucson AZ 85701  
e-mail: karen.wilhelmsen@deq.pima.gov

**Re: ASARCO Mission Complex Air Quality Permit Renewal Application  
Town of Sahuarita Comments on PDEQ Proposed Permit**

Dear Ms. Wilhelmsen:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the ASARCO Mission Complex Air Quality Permit Renewal Application and the PDEQ Proposed Permit. The Town has received concerns from area residents regarding the location of the existing monitoring station relative to the mining activities, observed wind direction, and residential /commercial areas within the Town of Sahuarita.

The existing Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (PDEQ) monitoring site is located about 1.5 miles south of the the Town of Sahuarita and about 5 miles south of the ASARCO Mission Complex activities presented in the Proposed Permit. Specifically, the PDEQ monitoring site is located in Green Valley, 100 meters west of La Canada and 0.5 kilometers west of Interstate 19 (source: PDEQ Website). While the Proposed Permit provides measures to ensure the facility controls fugitive particulate matter and assures compliance is maintained through compliance assurance monitoring (CAM) plans for specific emission units, that monitoring is done by the permit holder. The lack of a PDEQ monitoring site in Sahuarita fails to monitor the population exposure to a significant source of airborne particulates. Such a site should be operated and maintained by PDEQ.

The installation of a monitoring station that considers the location of mining activities covered by the Proposed Permit, prevailing wind direction and residential /commercial areas within the Town of Sahuarita would provide ongoing monitoring by PDEQ and would enable the public to access real-time air quality information through the PDEQ Info Now webpage. Costs associated with the installation and monitoring of such a station should be borne by ASARCO as a requirement of the Permit Renewal.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed permit and we appreciate your ongoing efforts to improve and protect air quality throughout Pima County.

Respectfully,

Farhad Moghimi, P.E.  
Assistant Town Manager / Town Engineer

cc: File