

Bill Childress
District Manager, BLM Las Cruces District

February 10, 2016

Dear Mr. Childress:

The purpose of this letter is to provide written comments on the Copper Flat Copper Mine Draft Environmental Impact Statement that I believe to be complete and accurate. This belief is based on the quality of the analysis and the assessments with regards to environmental impacts to the lands, air, waters, wildlife and communities. The assessments are clear, straightforward and relevant to the proposed actions identified in the draft EIS. Additionally, they are well supported in Volume II of the draft EIS with significant and sufficient data and expert studies relevant to the specific impacts this proposed project would have on lands, air, waters, wildlife and communities.

Although technical experts, scientists and engineers will almost always prefer to have additional data and time for analysis and study, I believe this draft EIS has met a high standard of thorough analysis and quality assessment. As an example, the water quality assessment of the pit lake is supported with years of water quality data from the existing pit lake as well as detailed hydrologic and geologic studies prepared by recognized experts of this topic. Additionally, the mitigations identified and proposed with regards to the pit lake are feasible and allow for adjustments that may be needed to ensure long-term water quality. The environmental assessment of the pit lake water quality is just one example of the quality and accuracy of the draft EIS document. It is representative of the quality and accuracy found in the sections on air quality, water quality, surface water use, groundwater resources, cultural resources, social economics, wildlife and migratory birds as well as other sections of the draft EIS.

I support the proposed Copper Flat project for several reasons.

- There continues to be a need for sources of copper used in the building of infrastructure. New infrastructure is necessary to sustain the improvements in the standard of living of peoples and communities throughout the world.
- The Copper Flat mine will provide for over 2,000 well paying jobs with good benefits in an area where jobs and job growth is scarce.
- Job training programs that will occur as a result of this project will provide lifetime skill sets for many of the local residents.
- Post mining reclamation of the area will be to higher standards than current reclamation of the area thus improving the long-term reclamation and productive use of these lands.
- The overall environmental impact of the project to the lands, air, waters and people of the area will be positive due to the mitigation strategies and best practices specified in the DEIS.

Therefore, I believe the BLM in conjunction with the other cooperating agencies should adopt this draft EIS and commence the next phase of the planning process which is completing the final EIS document.

Respectfully,
Ed Fidler

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