

Virginia Thompson

We in the Alto/Ruidoso area have been fighting this battle for close to 1 ♦ years, ever since Roper Construction filed its initial application with the Air Quality Bureau in June, 2021 and posted its not very visible Notice at the site (6 acres) along State Hwy 220 about 1/3 mile from where 220 intersects Hwy. 48.

Understandably, some battle fatigue has set in, following the AQB hearing in February and legal objections filed separately in the 12th Judicial District.

I live about 2/3 miles from the proposed site, just off Hwy. 220.

1. The Air Quality Bureau has consistently maintained that available sources of water to produce the cement outlined in Roper's application and achieve emission controls lined out in that document are not in its designated area of concern. There is no water available on site. To produce the total cubic yards of cement outlined in Roper's initial application (the application has been amended many times since initial filing) would require 55,000 gallons/day. Large water trucks carry about 8,000 gallons each, so we're talking about 7 water trucks alone per day. This doesn't even include additional water for emissions control, which, combining the two, would amount to some 62 acre feet/year, over 20 million gallons.

2. Additional trucks would be hauling in all the materials to make the cement itself, sand, fly ash etc. Cement delivery trucks would be coming and going. Estimates of 305 trucks per day have been made, all this along a narrow 2 lane Hwy (220) with homes directly to the south and directly to the north of the site. The truck traffic alone would effectively destroy Hwy. 220 as the main access road for all residents in the area, extending many miles east.

Can you imagine this in YOUR neighborhood ?

3. Holloman AFB meteorological data were used in Roper Construction's Air Quality application. Holloman is 46 miles distant at an altitude of 4000' while Alto is mountainous at 7550' Holloman has different topography, windspeeds and direction. Our last big fire in the area (The McBride Fire) started this year on April 12. On that day, winds in Alto were gusting to 70-80 MPH. On the same day, winds at Holloman AFB were gusting to 28 MPH.

4. As noted in previous public testimony and as I have witnessed quite a few times since moving to Alto 22 years ago, on occasion our skies turn to a white haze with sand & gypsum glowing up from White Sands (40 miles away). These substances are much heavier than cement dust.

I have read that cement dust itself is 30% cancer causing crystalline silica. Regarding "proposed" mitigation of hazardous air particles, I remain unconvinced.

5. This proposed industrial facility, close to homes along a designated Scenic Byway with no water available on site to manufacture a water intensive product, cement, is the exact opposite of an improvement to the environment.

It's a mystery why Roper Construction continues to doggedly pursue building a cement batch plant in such an obviously unsuitable location, particularly when restrictions on land use were well known to the buyer at time of purchase. It seems there are forces at work that want to turn a Scenic Byway into an Industrial Byway, potentially destroying Air Quality and quality of life for people, plants and animals in the process.