

# Fred Runkel

Re: AZDEQ's proposal to allow discharge from "historic tailings" into Alum Gulch.

The problem with this: this ignores the situation in which there are new tailings and new pollutants that would be released into Alum Gulch.

We have verified information about South32's operation of this site for years: the tailings in question are not merely "historic." There are also new tailings. Also ignored are documented findings by both South32 and ADEQ that the tailings pile and mine seepage from this pile includes new sources of pollutants.

ADEQ's conclusion that the only mine seepage that will be discharged to Alum Gulch from the tailings pile will come from historic tailings is plainly inaccurate because it chooses not to acknowledge this documented information. A realistic revised permit will take into account this information and assess the pollutants introduced by all the tailings at his site, historic as well as new.

Re: New Source Analysis should be required.

ADEQ's stance on this is that South32 operation, both current operations as well as planned, are only a continuation of the historic mine.

To put it plainly, this strains credulity. Of course it is clear and obvious why you want to maintain this fiction, so that current standards of the Clean Water Act can be avoided. But what about ADEQ's stated mission/vision; "To protect and enhance public health and the environment in Arizona"

I think it should be evident to all that the deep mine shafts, two wastewater treatment plants, exploration shafts, dewatering wells, new expanded tailings facility containing both historic and new material, tailings drainage pond, and associated infrastructure at the Hermosa Project site were built within the last 10 years (or are currently being constructed) meet the common sense definition of something more than merely the "historic" mine.

As such these extensive, complicated and new facilities (which South32 loves to extol as "innovative") must be considered a legal new source of discharge before issuing a renewed permit.

Furthermore, ADEQ should revise the permit to acknowledge that the mine is fully expected to go into production during the life of this permit.

Furthermore, As a new source, the mine is subject to all modern performance standards and requirements of the Clean Water Act.

I believe that asking you to do this is nothing more than asking you to honor ADEQ's stated Mission/Vision as declared on your webpage: To protect and enhance public health and the environment in Arizona"

Re: Water quality monitoring frequency.

The Draft Permit only requires these measurements be taken once per quarter (Assessment Levels), twice per year (Discharge Characterization Testing), even only once per year (Whole Effluent Toxicity).

This means that elevated levels of contaminants such as arsenic, cyanide, cadmium, lead, mercury, uranium could go undetected for months. Please recall that the residents of Patagonia actually drink this water.

To reduce the risk of this happening it is absolutely essential, to protect human health, that monitoring be done more frequently.