

Peggy Ollerhead

I am writing to express my concerns over the proposed monitoring, record keeping and compliance reporting for the Copper World project. I am specifically concerned with the ambient levels of lead and the hazard that it poses to young children in the neighborhoods and schools located near the proposed mine, processing facilities, and tailings.

In the early 1990's, I worked as a special educator conducting psychoeducational evaluations at the Kennedy Krieger Institute (KKI) affiliated with Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD. KKI is a training and research center that focuses on children and young adults with developmental disabilities and disorders of the brain, spinal cord and musculoskeletal system. I am still haunted by the young lives that were compromised by their exposure to lead, a neuro toxin that has the greatest impact on the developing brain and is most toxic to those under the age of six because of their hand to mouth behavior.

According to Stanford University's fact sheet about the effects of lead poisoning in children, "Lead poisoning can affect just about every system in the body yet often produces no definitive symptoms. The following are some of the most common symptoms of lead poisoning:

- Damage to the brain and nervous system
- Behavior and learning problems, or slowed growth
- Hearing problems
- Headaches
- Anemia."

Severe lead poisoning can result in convulsions, coma, and even death.

The amount of lead in the blood is referred to blood lead level (BLL) and both the American Medical Association (in their journal Pediatrics), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) childhood lead poisoning data emphasize that "There is no known safe BLL." Representatives from AZDEQ, concurred with my comments at the August 14 informational meeting in Vail, and stated "yes, there is no safe lead level for children, that is scientifically a fact."

The American Journal for Public Health (AJPH) devoted a special issue to this health emergency and highlighted the silent "take home lead" that can occur when adults are exposed to lead dust at their workplaces and then transfer the lead to their homes on clothing exposing their children to lead particles. The AJPH also emphasized the importance of monitoring air quality at ground level and checking the lead levels in the soil where children play.

I implore AZDEQ to listen to science and stand up for the health and safety of our children.

Hudbay's own 2023 Pre-Feasibility Study shows the company plans to dump mining waste (containing lead and other hazardous materials) within 600 feet of houses and one-and-a half miles from Copper Ridge Elementary School in Corona de Tucson. This is not a theoretical discussion.

This is real. We know that there are no safe blood lead levels in our children. Stop the madness of allowing a mine and toxic tailings that will cause irreparable harm. Given these facts, there is no way to ensure that the mine protects our air, environment and the health and safety of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens. Do not let it proceed.