

Christopher Johnson

To the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ):

I am writing to express my opposition to the current air quality permit for Hudbay Minerals' Copper World mine. ADEQ's mission is to protect and enhance public health and the environment in Arizona, yet the proposed Class II permit falls short of that critical responsibility.

At a recent town hall, Hudbay and other mining experts urged the public to trust ADEQ and the engineers who claim to have designed systems that will protect the environment. However, trust must be earned, not taken for granted. If Hudbay is truly confident in its ability to meet environmental standards, it should have demonstrated its commitment to protecting the public and the environment by applying for a Class I permit, which imposes stricter regulations, requires comprehensive monitoring, and ensures greater transparency and accountability to the public.

If the experts behind this project are as capable and environmentally conscious as they claim, they should have no problem meeting, at a minimum, the higher standards required by a Class I permit. The technology and practices they tout should be more than adequate to meet these requirements. Yet, by opting for a Class II permit, Hudbay has shown that it prefers to cut corners at the expense of the public's trust and well-being.

ADEQ has a responsibility to live up to its mission, and as members of this community, we demand better. We expect you to hold Hudbay to the highest possible standards, rather than lowering the bar for an industry that has a track record of leaving environmental destruction in its wake. Our community deserves better, and ADEQ is capable of doing better. You have the power to set a precedent that values public health over corporate convenience.

Imagine a future where ADEQ officials— those tasked with upholding the agency's mission— reflect on their careers and the decisions they made. Will you be proud of standing firm in defense of clean air, safe water, and environmental stewardship? Or will you look back with regret, knowing that a decision made under your watch contributed to environmental and public health crises? Hudbay's history of environmental degradation, particularly in countries with weaker regulations, is well-documented. We cannot afford to let Arizona become the next victim of their destructive practices.

The people of Arizona, especially those living in proximity to the proposed mine, are depending on ADEQ to be the protector of the environment and public health. Issuing a Class II permit for an operation of this magnitude is not enough. It does not fulfill the agency's duty to safeguard the future of our air, water, and ecosystems. This decision should be based on the highest possible standards, not on minimizing accountability for corporate interests.

Our community is demanding better, and ADEQ CAN do better. I strongly urge you, at a minimum, to require Hudbay to apply for a Class I permit to ensure that this project meets standards necessary to protect public health and the environment. Anything less is a FAILURE of the mission you are entrusted to uphold.

In the years to come, will ADEQ be remembered as the agency that stood up for the people of Arizona and demanded the highest environmental standards, or will it be known as the agency that gave Hubday a pass, leaving destruction in its wake? The choice is yours, and the consequences will be lasting.