

Dr. Michael Ray Jacobson

As a Tucsonan since I moved here from Pittsburgh in 1975, as a PhD in Astronomy from Cornell University and as a member of the American Meteorological Society, I have numerous reasons to deplore the presence of six open pit mines at Copper World. Two facts motivate this fear: The fact that the mine actually abuts the far southern suburbs of the Tucson Metropolitan Area, and the fact that the prevailing winds are often from the south and east, the direction of Copper World from Tucson. The only way to extract the minerals from the large rock masses below is to remove and transport on the order of a CUBIC MILE of overburden from these six areas, creating the open pits. That will mean the inevitable release of enormous amounts dust that will largely settle in Greater Tucson due to the wind. Arguments that water will be sprayed on the dirt as it is excavated might work, but would waste such vast amounts of water as to be a serious problem in its own right. There is no way to safely operate an open pit mine often upwind from a large city!

I grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in Greenfield, a neighborhood just a few miles southeast of a line of seven blast furnaces operated by the late Jones & Laughlin Steel Company. Blast furnaces run continuously; if allowed to cool down, the limestone liner of the furnaces will crack and the iron within would solidify into an immovable mass. Therefore, we had to breath the effluent when the wind was from the west to northwest. I still recall, with strange fondness, the acrid odor of the traces of hydrogen sulfide - rotten egg smell - that permeated my childhood. While that will not be the case with Copper World, the loss of the relatively fresh, clean air will be profound.

So, Copper World should not be permitted; open pit mining has no place this close to the homes of around one million people. The ultimate value of our good air will ultimately bring more and cleaner industry and tourism to our area. The permit should be denied.