

# audra bidegain

## ADEQ

My name is Audra Bidegain and my family has lived here and been apart of this community since 1925. I grew up here. I went to school here and now my brother and I are raising our kids here. They go to the school that's less than a mile away from ADI. I never thought I would be standing here tonight to talk about an aluminum plant in Benson. I definitely didn't see that coming. Then again nobody really did because that was by design.

Last time we met with ADEQ we asked for REAL numbers. We were told ADEQ just uses the numbers that ADI provides and that they won't know what the real numbers are until ADI is here and actively polluting.

Essentially what they are saying is we know you are about to get a bad neighbor, but we just don't know how bad.

We want REAL numbers because we are REAL people living in a REAL town. There is a very REAL nursing home across the street from the proposed site. There is a very REAL school with Real children less than a mile away. There is a very REAL River that is going to be polluted. We deserve REAL numbers! We deserve to be protected and it's your job to do it. Allowing this company to come in, pollute our town, and suck up all of our water is not protecting us. If you approve this permit you are telling this community that you don't care about the health risks, environmental risks, and more importantly the future of our children.

When asked what happens when the particulate settles on the soil and eventually leaches into the surface water, There was no answer. When asked what the effect the particulate would have on farmland and the grazing animals. There was no answer. We asked what the long term effects would be on our health. There was no answer.

Myself and a couple of others met with Bill Glaser from ADI this week. We sat down at the table with the understanding we were not going to convince the other to change their mind. Bill took the time to answer all of our questions and I really appreciated that. One of the questions we asked was if ADI would be building anything beneath the surface . Bill explained the caster pit would be 90 feet below the surface. This is where the melting/smelting will take place. We all know that you don't have to go very deep to hit water near the River. My buddy has a well just across the River that's drilled to 100 feet but has standing water at 20 feet most of the year. Bill explained the testing was done in January. In January we had received very little rain. Although we have not had a very active monsoon this year, there has been multiple times that the river has been running bank to bank. I voiced my concern that the caster pit would be sitting in or very close to the water level and not be sitting on solid ground. Therefore if there was a shift or something that caused a crack the contents of the caster pit would be released into the water. Bill did not share my concern and believed there is no water at 90feet.

Our City officials are not going to protect us. They are afraid of being sued by this company. They are afraid to stand up for what is right. They have remained silent. They have not done the research. They are sticking their heads in the sand and putting the decision on you. You have the ability to

save this town. I'm sure this company will sue you as well because that's what they do when they don't get their way. They throw a fit and start making threats. They are holding our town hostage and you are our last hope. They came in and took advantage of our small town. They made sure that this didn't go to a council vote because that's how they lost in Gila Bend. Instead four people from planning and zoning which are non-elected positions decided the fate of this town. That was also by design.

This company has a horrific track record with 93 violation in four years. That doesn't sound like someone who is committed to being a good neighbor. When they violate they simply pay the fines and continue polluting. Paying the fine doesn't undo the damage. It doesn't put clean water back in the ground or clean air back in our lungs.

The argument had been made that we already have Apache nitrogen here. They have been here since 1922. I think we have learned a few things since 1922. Apache nitrogen is a Superfund. Why would want another one? Last meeting I was approached by an older gentleman who explained a friend of his who lives near Apache nitrogen recently took a water sample from his well in for testing. The company called him immediately and told him "DON'T DRINK THE WATER"

This company does not belong in our small town. This company will put our health at risk. This company will use 70% more water than the town currently uses. This company will ruin this town. I know you have not denied a permit in 22 years. I'm sure there are certain ones you had. Don't let this be one of them.

If you grant this permit you will be sealing our fate. You said that ultimately the EPA has the final decision. I just wish someone would step up and make the right decision instead of passing the buck. Don't be held hostage by ADI. You have the ability to stop this....will you?

Respectfully,  
Audra Bidegain  
Benson, AZ