

Jeanie Michaels

Dear Arizona Department of Environmental Quality,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed Title V air quality permit for Aluminum Dynamics, Inc. in Benson, Arizona. Locating this facility so close to neighborhoods, schools, nursing homes, farmland, the San Pedro River, and wildlife habitats presents an unacceptable risk to public health, the environment, and our community's long-term sustainability.

According to the permit application, the facility would be authorized to emit significant amounts of:

- Particulate Matter (PM2.5 and PM10): Fine particles that penetrate deep into the lungs, linked to asthma, COPD, cardiovascular disease, and premature death. Children, seniors, and those with existing health conditions are especially vulnerable.
- Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) and Carbon Monoxide (CO): Both contribute to ground-level ozone (smog), which impairs lung function, worsens respiratory illness, and increases emergency hospital visits.
- Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs): Chemical precursors to smog and many of which are toxic or carcinogenic.
- Hydrogen Chloride (HCl): A hazardous air pollutant that causes severe irritation of the respiratory system, eyes, and skin, with long-term exposure linked to chronic bronchitis and other health complications.

The Benson area is a rural valley with limited air circulation, which means pollutants are more likely to concentrate and linger rather than disperse. This creates a higher risk of long-term exposure compared to urban areas with more stringent air monitoring and pollution controls. This facility would worsen those risks.

Beyond direct health impacts, there are additional concerns:

- Environmental Harm: The San Pedro River is one of the last free-flowing rivers in the Southwest, supporting migratory birds, native fish, and critical riparian habitat. Increased air and potential water pollution from industrial operations threaten this fragile ecosystem.
- Odor and Quality of Life: The permit does not adequately address odor control or monitoring. Persistent industrial odors would degrade daily life for nearby residents, reducing property values and discouraging tourism, which is vital for our local economy.
- Company Track Record: Steel Dynamics, the parent company of Aluminum Dynamics, has a documented history of environmental violations, including Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act violations in other states. This pattern of noncompliance raises serious concerns about whether this facility would be operated with transparency, accountability, or adequate safeguards for public health.

Our community should not be treated as an industrial dumping ground. Rural towns like Benson deserve the same clean air protections as urban areas. Approving this permit would put short-term industrial profit over the long-term health, safety, and prosperity of our residents.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality to deny the Title V air quality permit for Aluminum Dynamics, Inc.

Sincerely,

Jeanie & Vince Michaels
Benson, AZ 85602