

Jerry Schoeppner, Director  
Mining and Minerals Division  
1220 South St. Francis Drive  
Santa Fe, NM 87505



8 SEPT 22

Dear Mr Schoeppner,

At the recent public hearing in Silver City on 6 AUG 22, most of the assurances to the public from Freeport McMoRan, regarding groundwater, were based on the 1970 Trauger Report. "It's old but things haven't changed much" said a Freeport spokesperson. Geologically speaking maybe not much, with the exception of the extractions from the mines. However, hydrologically speaking, things have changed a lot. The 50 year old Trauger report most certainly does not reflect present day rainfall conditions, nor does it reflect the world-wide drought and climate crisis, that has caused rising heat, drought, floods, and famine.

Rising temperatures cause water to evaporate from land faster, making heat waves, droughts and wildfires more frequent and intense. Over the past 50 years, scientists have measured an increase in the severity of these conditions worldwide.

As we find ourselves heading into what scientists are calling a 1200 year extreme drought, we find our dwindling water supply further threatened not only by the climate crisis, but by extractive industries. A Freeport representative, said to me "we have been through droughts before." Probably so, but not like this one. 1200 years ago was about the time that native people left the area due to drought before. With triple digit temperatures in Canada, Europe, and North America, and melting ice caps, this is not a casual dry spell.

Residents of Loma Blanca subdivision, 2 miles away from the proposed Emma pit, are naturally concerned about water table levels, as the proposed pit will intersect the groundwater table. The effects of drawdown on the water table are uncertain. The cone of depression as per Freeport, will not extend to our subdivision. However, according to the Little Rock MPO Amendment Environmental Assessment; May 2022, Freeport installed a drawdown monitoring well at Burro Mountain Homestead, which is four miles away from the Little Rock

site at the Tyrone Mine, and which revealed a fluctuating groundwater level of five feet, which Freeport maintains is DUE TO CLIMATE.

It seems reasonable to conclude that since climate change is a scientific fact, and is supported by the statement DTC, then subsequent drawdown will occur as the drought worsens. The cone of depression will likely expand as well. Will any drawdown caused by the expansion be attributed to "Climate" as well, or will Emma exasperate an already identified critical condition? Who will ascertain whether it is drawdown caused by the climate or by The Emma Project?

According to projections made by Freeport, at the 16.8 to 20 gpm rate to de-water the pit of combined groundwater and runoff, an additional approximately 8 million gallon draw will occur annually. It is unacceptable in an area just 2 miles from the site, to believe that no additional drawdown will occur. Therefore, the residents of Loma Blanca would like to see a mitigation plan before any further water usage of this magnitude is permitted. Assurances from Freeport are not enough. There needs to be thought given to the possibilities expressed previously, and a plan of mitigated action should it become necessary needs to be included. This should be done and a monitoring well should be installed in the Loma Blanca subdivision before any further permits are forthcoming.

As a military veteran with PTS, I am not looking forward to the explosive blasting either, not to mention all the other environmental concerns. However, water is life and without it there is none. Therefore, it seems most imprudent to further push the envelope of water usage in a time of extreme drought. The Emma Pit Expansion project is not in the best public interest for the residents who live nearby. It is in the best interests of Freeport, and therefore Freeport should guarantee that this life source will not be affected. Assurances are not enough, there needs to be a solid mitigation plan before any more permits are allowed, followed by an action plan. Therefore a second public hearing is requested to clarify such.

Sincerely,



Arthur Ratcliffe  
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