



Lets Allow Our Nation's Environmental Laws to Do the Job as They were Originally Intended

by David F. Briggs

When our nation's environmental laws were first enacted during the late 1960s and 1970s, this legislation was never intended to be used as an impediment to projects, which were required to meet the basic needs of American society. This is easily illustrated by examining the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, which states it was designed to "encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment." Its purpose was intended to "foster and promote the general welfare, to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony and fulfill social, economic and other requirements of the present and future generations of Americans."

There will always be valid reasons to carefully scrutinize or even oppose new proposals, whether dealing with mining projects, electrical transmission lines, oil and gas pipelines, solar energy generating plants, highways, landfills and cell tower sites. However, there are socioeconomic benefits from the goods and services provided by these projects and as such impacts that may result from these activities are the price we pay to maintain our basic way of life.

All of these projects are required to undergo a rigorous permitting process, which includes opportunities for public comment, before decisions are made on how these projects are allowed to proceed. This is the case for the U. S. Forest Service's recent preliminary Final Environmental Impact Statement on the Rosemont Copper project, which shows it in compliance with all of the regulations set forth in our nation's environmental laws. Despite this, Rosemont's foes have vowed to halt this important project through expensive and time-consuming litigation.

Misuse of our environmental laws has only contributed to America's increased dependence on foreign sources for the necessities of life. Furthermore, we are now in the sixth year of the greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression. Although economic forecasters claim the recovery is progressing well, there is little evidence of this for many in southern Arizona, who cannot find

a job to support their families. However, future employment opportunities provided by the Rosemont project are not the only jobs threatened by the actions of Rosemont's opponents. The impact will be much greater. Many additional job opportunities as well as potential tax revenues for local governments will also be lost because the actions of a few only reinforce the perception of many that Tucson is not a business friendly community.



**David F. Briggs at Rosemont, the Future Site of Arizona's
Next 21st Century Copper Mine**

History has repeatedly shown that lawsuits fail to halt large industrial projects of this type once they have reached the stage Rosemont Copper has attained in the permitting process. The weight of the scientific, engineering and other data supporting the project's compliance with local, state and federal regulations is simply too great to overcome.

Do Rosemont's opponents really believe they can prevail on this issue or is a delay the best they can hope for?

Are our nation's environmental laws really meant to be used in this manner?

Must those who will ultimately benefit from Rosemont Copper's efforts to develop a 21st century mine endure many months of additional hardship before this issue is finally resolved in Rosemont's favor?

Disclaimer: David F. Briggs is a resident of Pima county and a geologist, who has intermittently worked on the Rosemont Copper project since 2006. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of Rosemont Copper.

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