



*"Looking Forward – Reaching Higher"™*

April 5, 2013

Pam Castaneda, Administrator  
New Mexico Environment Department  
1190 S. St. Francis Drive, N2153  
P.O. Box 5469  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502

Dear Ms. Castaneda:

New Mexico's Water Quality Control Commission has an opportunity to provide our state with improved regulations that define how ground water should be monitored and protected at copper mining operations.

After months of discussions among advisory committees and working groups that included government, academics, environmental interest groups and industry, the New Mexico Environment Department has submitted to the WQCC its "Proposed Copper Rules." The NMED recommends these rules replace our current bureaucratic, inconsistent system with a strict, consistent, clear and reliable framework to protect ground water today and for years after operations cease.

This is the kind of common sense reform we should expect from our government officials – ensuring the environment is protected while also giving an industry critical to our economy the kind of clarity it needs to make additional investments and create jobs – jobs our rural southwestern communities depend on.

For the sake of our groundwater and New Mexico's economy, I encourage approval of these proposed copper rules.

Sincerely,

Gregory Shaver  
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PAM - TRIED TO EMAIL THIS BUT IT WOULD NOT GO!

## **Skip Thacker**

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**From:** "Skip Thacker" <2beeps@silvercity-nm.com>  
**Date:** Friday, April 05, 2013 3:02 PM  
**To:** <Pam.Castaneda@state.nm.us>  
**Cc:** "Tony Trujillo" <Tony\_Trujillo@FMI.com>  
**Subject:** RE: In the Matter of Proposed Amendment to 20.6.2 NMAC (Copper Rule),

Dear Pam,

As a board member of the Gila Economic Development Alliance (Gila EDA) here in Silver City/Grant County, please allow me to offer the following comments regarding the proposed Copper Rules. The mining operations here in Grant County have a **major impact** on the health of our economy!!

As a New Mexico resident who is disappointed by the polarized political environment we see among our elected officials, every now and then I am pleasantly surprised to learn of measures that represent the best interests of their constituents.

Following a bipartisan bill that was signed in 2009 by Governor Richardson, requiring clear guidelines for protecting ground water beneath copper mining operations, New Mexico government officials are finally close to adopting new rules.

The proposed Copper Rules, developed by the New Mexico Environment Department after months of technical and advisory committee meetings with government officials, academics, resource experts, environmental interest groups and industry representatives, has submitted to our state's Water Quality Control Commission its "Proposed Copper Rules." It is now up to the members of the WQCC to vote to adopt these rules.

These new rules replace an inconsistent system for protecting ground water, which is subject to various interpretations by regulators, inspectors and the industry. The new criteria provide more clarity, transparency and accountability around ground water protection by operators of copper mines.

These new regulations have two critical benefits: First of all, they require new and expanded facilities equipped with technologies that will protect ground water, rigorous criteria for closing a mine to minimize ground water impacts, and revised engineering design requirements for waste rock, stockpiles, tanks, pipelines and impoundments, so the Proposed Copper Rules are a great step forward in environmental protection, regulation and enforcement.

Secondly, New Mexico's copper mining industry is a significant contributor to the state's economy, creating \$326 million in economic impact in 2011 that supported 4,328 New Mexican jobs. The Proposed Copper Rules will allow mining companies to better plan and invest in future operations, a critical step for economic development and job creation in several southern New Mexico communities.

A measure supported by New Mexico academics and resource management experts that represents a win-win for the environment and the economy?

This seems like a no-brainer to me, and I'm confident the members of the WQCC will do the

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right thing and adopt these rules.

Best Regards,

Skip Thacker

Gila Economic Development Alliance, Silver City