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ADEQ Proposes Air Quality Permit Revision for Safford Mine in Graham County

PHOENIX (Aug. 29, 2008) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Director Steve Owens announced today that ADEQ is proposing a revision to the air quality permit for the Freeport-McMoRan mine near Safford in Graham County.

“This permit revision will enable the mine to continue its operations more effectively and provide good-paying jobs in Graham County, while making sure that air quality and public health in the community are protected,” Owens said.

The proposed permit revision allows the company to build and run a new facility to produce sulfuric acid, which is used in the process that extracts copper from soil. The permit requires the company to install air pollution control equipment which will limit, to safe levels, emissions of sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, volatile organic compounds, and sulfuric acid mist.

To ensure that the Freeport-McMoRan mine remains within state and federal standards, the permit requires the company to monitor emissions on a continuous basis and regularly provide the monitoring data to ADEQ.

A public hearing on the permit will be held at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 23 at the City Hall Annex, 808 S. 8th Ave., in Safford. Persons wishing to submit written comments can do so at the hearing. Mailed comments must be received by Sept. 23. Comments should be sent to: Director, Air Quality Division, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, 1110 W. Washington Street, 3415A-1, Phoenix, Az. 85007-2935.