



Press Release

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ADEQ Issues Amended Temporary Aquifer Protection Permit to Curis Resources for Proposed Mine in Florence

PHOENIX – (July 5, 2013) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality officials announced Friday that, following extensive public comment, an amended temporary individual aquifer protection permit (APP) has been issued to Curis Resources for discharges associated with a proposed mining operation in Florence.

ADEQ issued a temporary APP to Curis in September 2012. The temporary APP conditionally authorized a pilot project to inject solutions into copper bearing zones beneath the ground surface that would then be extracted and processed to recover copper. Monitoring of the injected solutions would be required to ensure adjacent groundwater resources are protected. Data from the pilot project may be used by Curis to develop data for an APP application for a full-scale project.

Before and following issuance of the temporary permit, there was extensive opportunity for public involvement including a public meeting and a public hearing and a request for comments. Upon receipt and consideration of 250 written comments, ADEQ has issued this amended temporary individual permit that adds requirements to the permit issued in September 2012. The changes include:

- Boreholes within 150 feet of the ponds will be plugged and abandoned before discharges can occur.
- Clarification in the permit that injection wells may be used as recovery wells if necessary to maintain control of injected fluids.
- The time frame for initiating a hydrogeologic investigation and analysis report in the event of a permit exceedance is now three months instead of six months.
- Groundwater level maps and analyses for the facility that demonstrate control of groundwater flow will now be required.
- Reports submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under its Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program permit must now also be submitted to ADEQ.
- The time frame allowed for the monitoring well installation (MW-01) nearest the facility will be reduced from 90 days to 45 days following the effective date of the permit.

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The amended temporary APP is effective for one year and may be renewed for one additional year. However, the amended permit will not become effective until a final decision of the water quality appeals board or until Curis notifies ADEQ that the company can use the authorization to operate granted by the amended permit. Other permits may also be required for the mining operation to begin.

The amended permit will require Curis to meet aquifer water quality standards at identified points of compliance groundwater monitoring wells and to use the best available engineering controls to reduce discharges of pollutants to groundwater to the greatest degree achievable.

“We have worked diligently to ensure full public participation in our decision making process and are convinced that the already protective permit has been improved as a result,” ADEQ Director Henry Darwin said.

The amended temporary APP is only one of the permits necessary before Curis can begin its operations. EPA is currently reviewing an application for an underground injection control permit.

The amended temporary APP, decision letter and ADEQ’s responses to public comments can be found at <http://www.azdeq.gov/environ/water/permits/index.html>

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