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Air Quality Permit Issued to Freeport's Morenci Mine for Dust Controls in Project that could add Hundreds of Jobs

PHOENIX (March 14, 2012) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality officials announced today that an air quality permit has been issued to Freeport-McMoRan Morenci Inc. to build a new concentrator. The expanded operations, currently in the advanced evaluation stage, could add up to 600 permanent jobs at the Morenci mine while using top-of-the-line dust controls.

In addition to the about 600 permanent jobs, as many as 1,400 more construction jobs could be created during the construction of the concentrator at the mine, located in Greenlee County in eastern Arizona.

The air quality permit requires installation of high-efficiency fabric filter dust controls in the new concentrator line to reduce particulate matter emissions. In addition, the Freeport facility is retrofitting emission points of existing equipment which are not part of the expansion project with the new dust collectors.

The facility's overall dust emissions will decrease even with the construction of the planned concentrator as a result of the installation of the dust controls.

"This construction project could add hundreds of much needed jobs to the eastern Arizona region's economy while at the same time implementing state of the art dust controls which will protect human health and the environment," ADEQ Director Henry Darwin said. "This is an excellent example of how all parties can work together to green and grow the economy."

The new concentrator would add capacity to process an additional 55,000 tons of copper ore daily.

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