To: Albright, David[Albright.David@epa.gov]; Dermer, Michele[Dermer.Michele@epa.gov]; Robin, George[Robin.George@epa.gov]
Cc: 'Tori Poppenheimer'[Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy
From: Tori Poppenheimer
Sent: Thur 4/14/2016 4:20:10 AM
Subject: Please Deny Freeport McMoRan's aquifer exemption request

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen of San Luis Obispo County, CA, which is also home to the Freeport McMoRan Oil & Gas Arroyo Grande Oil Field. As you know it was the EPA that discovered Freeport-McMoRan, along with other oil companies, have been illegally injecting oil waste water in violation of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

As an engineer I might be able to assess an EIR report in a more un-biased, in depth and analytical method than most. However I must say, the almost decade old EIR this exemption is based on has significant flaws. The cross sections analyzing the strata through the exemption area and surrounding drinking water ground water areas not owned or leased by FMMR clearly show several flaws in the assumption that these extraction operations have little or no effect on the local drinking water wells.

Yes, I agree that as long as they continue to aggressively de-water and pump this basin there is little to no chance that injected fluids might flow up-hill into surrounding basins. However at some point this oil field will either be played out or not viable to continue operating. We have no cross section data as to the water tables from the late 1800's prior to starting oil extraction operations. I have an old friend from LA who is a geologists that works tracking old leaking gas and diesel underground tanks, that said, upon reviewing the cross sections and EIR, that it is very likely that once the water table returns to its original slope, it might be possible for injected waste to flow into the neighboring ground water.

However the most current concern is that, what FMMR is doing right now is for a "complete certainty" draining precious clean fresh water from their neighbors water table. There is zero doubt that FMMR de-watering this lower "pool" in the aquifer for the entire area is pulling water much faster from the surrounding neighbors water table. Depleting their wells far below what they would be if this operation was less aggressive. Now we have folks living in the area that have issues with well capacity right now. But this exemption isn't about what is happening right now. This exemption will set the stage to allow FMMR to expand this oil field operation via their "Phase V" request, orders of magnitude beyond the current de-watering and waste injection. There has been no EIR that even looks at the impacts on local drinking water wells and irrigation wells once this lower basin is pumping/de-watering at the new highly expanded rate.

We are in a severe drought. But more importantly we might be looking at the new "Normal" for rain fall in our area. The amount of fresh clean water they are pulling into their polluted lower basin is astounding. Yes, no one is going to drink the water they have polluted. But their operation is drawing water from very fresh usable dips in the surrounding local ground water basins. Dips and regions that many local land owners rely on to provide fresh clean water to their property.

I agree that FMMR has " property rights". But what about the local folks living near? Do they not have property rights also?

Tori Poppenheimer

Board Member

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