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Tom Buschatzke, Director
Arizona Department of Water Resources
1110 West Washington Street, Suite 310
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Email: tbuschatzke@azwater.gov

Re: Copper World's Violation of the Arizona Groundwater Code

Dear Director Buschatzke,

This firm represents Save the Scenic Santa Ritas Association ("SSSR").

As your agency, Arizona Department of Water Resources ("ADWR"), is aware, Toronto-based Hudbay Minerals Inc., through its Arizona subsidiary, Copper World, Inc. ("Copper World"), is planning to operate the Copper World mine in the biodiverse and ecologically significant Santa Rita Mountains, approximately 30 miles southeast of Tucson, Pima County.

Copper World appears to be the first new major open pit copper mine in Arizona that plans to withdraw water from within an Active Management Area ("AMA") since the Groundwater Management Act was passed in 1980. Even before Hudbay's Board of Directors has approved construction of the mine, Copper World is already in violation of the Arizona Groundwater Code.

According to ADWR records, Copper World drilled four wells in 2024 and 2025: wells #[55-241987](#), #[55-241988](#) and #[55-242051](#) were drilled in the Sanrita West Wellfield; #[55-241989](#) was drilled in the Sanrita South Wellfield.

Copper World is mandated, within 30 days of installation of pumping equipment in any of its wells, to furnish you – as ADWR Director – with a "completion report," which includes critical information such as pumping capacity of the well, drawdown of the water level, and depth from the land surface to the static groundwater level. *See* A.R.S. § 45-600(B).

To date, Copper World has not filed pump installation completion reports for four (4) industrial water production wells (despite the fact that it has the data necessary to do so). Copper World is in clear violation of this mandatory requirement under the Groundwater Code.

It is noted that Copper World (then operating as Rosemont Copper Co.) provided a detailed pump completion report in 2019 for production well #[55-225120](#) that was drilled in the SanRita South Wellfield. This completion report includes a warning about possible well interference with then planned well #55-241989 that was subsequently drilled in 2024. Both wells were operating in 2025; thus, it is critical to know how both wells performed under pumping tests and whether there is actual well interference.

According to Copper World's [2025 Annual Groundwater Report](#) filed with ADWR on March 26, 2026, Copper World withdrew groundwater from each of these five wells totaling 33.49 acre-feet or 10.9 million gallons in 2025.

The pump installation completion reports provide crucial information about the ability of the aquifer to sustain high levels of groundwater pumping. This information is important for ADWR and affected and interested parties to understand the condition of the aquifer. In this case, one well is within the [Green Valley Subsidence Zone](#) – where excessive groundwater withdrawals are causing the ground to compact and sink – and the other four wells are immediately adjacent to the Zone.

The pump completion report data is material information for current and potential investors in Hudbay as well as public interest groups, including SSSR, who may want to know whether Copper World has a long-term sustainable groundwater water supply to operate for at least 20 years (or more) and how such pumping could impact nearby domestic wells, local and regional groundwater supplies, and the long-term stability and health of the aquifer(s) which could be irreparably harmed from increased ground subsidence resulting from Copper World's pumping.

This information is also relevant to the Town of Sahuarita, which in 2013 granted Copper World a conditioned [License](#) to encroach on the Town's right-of-way along Santa Rita Road for the purpose of installing a water pipeline which will connect Copper World's two groundwater wellfields to mine processing operations planned for the western slope of the Santa Rita Mountains. *See License*, § 1.

In return, Copper World is *inter alia* obliged to recharge a minimum of 105% of the amount of water withdrawn from the Sanrita West and Sanrita South wellfields (Exhibit C of the License) with Central Arizona Project ("CAP") water within a defined "Recharge Area" (Exhibit B to the License). *See License*, § 8.

With ongoing and expected additional cuts to the state's CAP water allocations, there are serious doubts as to whether and how Copper World will be able to access

sufficient CAP water needed to replenish anywhere close to 105% of the substantial amount of groundwater that Copper World will require over the life of the mine.

ADWR has a duty to the people of Arizona who are “dependent in whole or in part upon groundwater basins for their water supply” to “conserve, protect and allocate the use of groundwater resources of the state and to provide a framework for the comprehensive management and regulation of” groundwater in Arizona. *See* A.R.S. § 45-401 *et seq.* The Director “has general control and supervision of surface water, its appropriation and distribution, and of groundwater to the extent provided by this title.” A.R.S. § 45-103(B). The Director has mandatory duties under A.R.S. § 45-105(B) to “[e]xercise and perform all powers and duties vested in or imposed on the department and adopt and issue rules necessary to carry out the purposes of this title;” to “[a]dminister all laws relating to groundwater, as provided in this title;” and “[i]nvestigate and take appropriate action on any complaints alleging withdrawals, diversions, impoundments or uses of surface water or groundwater that may violate this title or the rules adopted pursuant to this title.”

Further, ADWR has a duty “to prevent unreasonably increasing damage to surrounding land or other water users from the concentration of wells.” A.R.S. § 45-598(A).

Because Copper World is in violation of A.R.S. § 45-600(B), we hereby request that you require Copper World to comply with its statutory requirements and assess civil penalties pursuant to your authority in A.R.S. §§ 45-634 and 635.

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 45-600(B), should Copper World decide to comply with Arizona law and file the completion reports with ADWR, please provide them to our firm as soon as practicable. (“[T]he department shall furnish [the reports] on request.”)

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

/s/ Rui Wang
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