



SAVE THE SCENIC
SANTA RITAS
ASSOCIATION

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September 8, 2026

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For Immediate Release

ADWR ignores Copper World's failure to file crucial aquifer impact reports from four high capacity wells

Hudbay offered last April to provide Sahuarita Mayor Tom Murphy with the missing data that could be hiding the mine's impact on the Upper Santa Cruz aquifer

Tucson—The Arizona Department of Water Resources is ignoring Hudbay Minerals' failure to file legally-required aquifer impact test results from four new groundwater production wells necessary to operate the company's proposed Copper World mine, Save the Scenic Santa Ritas said today.

The information is needed to understand Copper World's expected impact on the groundwater table.

"The missing aquifer impact data could show whether the wells can supply the proposed mine without causing excessive groundwater declines, reducing nearby well yields or worsening ongoing land subsidence," said SSSR Executive Director John Dougherty.

"Hudbay's failure to provide the required aquifer impact studies shows the company cannot be trusted to provide the public with accurate information on the mine's impact to area groundwater resources," Dougherty said.

Copper World's 20-year state permit to withdraw up to 6,000-acre-feet (2 billion gallons) of groundwater a year expires in January 2028. A Copper World technical report indicates the mine would require more than 9,400-acre-feet (3 billion gallons) of groundwater a year.

"Copper World, with the state's assistance, is illegally hiding critical information from the public which could be used to challenge Copper World's expected 2027 application to sharply increase groundwater pumping," Dougherty said. "The state must immediately enforce the law and require Copper World to publicly release the aquifer impact data."

[State law](#) requires well owners to file aquifer impact data from a new well in a document called a [Pump Installation Completion Report](#). The report must be filed within 30 days of a pump being installed. The department states the report provides "information very valuable to ADWR."

SSSR sent a formal [demand letter](#) to ADWR on Aug. 27 requesting the department begin enforcement action against Copper World for failing to file the reports. ADWR has not responded to SSSR's letter.



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Hudbay notified Sahuarita Mayor Thomas Murphy and town staff last April that it would “immediately” provide the town the pump test results after SSSR alerted the town the wells were operated in 2025. Sahuarita has released no information indicating it has requested the reports.

State records show Hudbay drilled four 1,200-foot-deep, high-capacity wells between December 2024 and May 2025. (See well driller reports for well #[55-241987](#), [55-241988](#), [55-241989](#) and [55-242051](#).) The wells are located in two wellfields immediately east of the Santa Cruz River called Sanrita West and Sanrita South. Hudbay operated all four wells in 2025, according to Copper World's [annual groundwater withdrawal report](#).

Copper World drilled a fifth production well in 2015 in the Sanrita South Wellfield. In this instance, the company filed a detailed pump completion report for the well. (See: [55-224120](#)). The report indicated the well could interfere with operations of a then planned second well ([55-241989](#)) that was subsequently installed in 2025.

Well [55-241988](#) is one of three production wells in the SanRita West Wellfield. The well is located within the [Green Valley land-subsidence zone](#) and the other two wells are immediately adjacent to the subsidence area. Surface sinking alters natural drainage slopes, increases flood risks, and stresses buried pipelines and building foundations.

"Hudbay has irresponsibly chosen to install its groundwater wells inside and adjacent to a known land subsidence area," Dougherty said. "And now the company is hiding data that would show how the wells will impact the aquifer."

SSSR [first notified ADWR](#) the well pump reports were not posted on the agency's website last April. The department [confirmed on June 17](#) the reports were required and had not been filed. The ADWR's website continues to show the reports missing as of Sept. 8.

SSSR notified the Sahuarita Town Council in an [April 16 letter](#) that Hudbay was in violation of a 2013 groundwater replenishment agreement and that the company failed to file the pump completion reports. Hudbay subsequently stated in an [April 27 email and letter](#) to Murphy and town staff that it would provide the test results if requested.

“If the Town would like a formal report on the 2025 pump test results, Copper World will prepare one immediately,” Robert Comer, Hudbay’s executive director for external affairs & legal, stated in the letter.



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"The Sahuarita Town Council should immediately request Hudbay to provide the 'formal' pump test reports and then make them available to the public," Dougherty said. "ADWR should do the same."

[The 2013 Sahuarita agreement](#) requires Hudbay to replenish 105% of the groundwater it pumps with Central Arizona Project water. The agreement also requires Copper World to provide the town with annual reports on the amount of groundwater pumped and recharged.

In exchange, the town granted Copper World a right-of-way along the Santa Rita Road to install a water pipeline that will connect Copper World's wellfields to the mine site in the Santa Rita Mountains.

SSSR [submitted a petition](#) to Sahuarita on May 28 signed by more than 140 Sahuarita residents requesting the town to hold a public hearing on how Hudbay intends to recharge 105% of the groundwater it pumps over the projected 44-year life of the mine. The town has not responded to the petition.

SSSR is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the Santa Rita Mountains and surrounding communities from the environmental impacts of the proposed Copper World mine.

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