



Copper Flat Mine Toolkit August 2026

Action to Take

- #1 - Join the public hearing to provide verbal public comment
- #2 - Submit written public comment to the Mining & Minerals Division or add your name to the [sign on letter](#).
- #3 - Submit a letter to the editor to your local newspaper

Public Meeting Details

 Date: Thursday, September 17

 Time: 5:30 pm

 Location: Hillsboro Community Center

*Option to join an open house hosted by NM Copper Company beginning at 2 pm at the Hillsboro Community Center.

[RSVP for reminders and updates on Facebook.](#)

Public meeting notice in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Written Public Comment Details

Public comments may be submitted via email or mail to:

- Email: MMD.MARP@emnrd.nm.gov
- Physical mailing address:
 - Director and Deputy Director Drew Roybal-Chavez, NM Mining and Minerals Division
 - 1220 South St. Francis Drive
 - Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Overview of the Proposed Copper Flat Mine

The proposed Copper Flat copper mine is located near Hillsboro in Sierra County, in the Las Animas Creek watershed. New Mexico Copper Corporation, a subsidiary of a Canadian mining company, is seeking state approval of a revised plan to reopen and operate the mine.

The company has changed an important part of its proposal: instead of storing mine waste in a conventional wet tailings pond, it now proposes filtering water out of the waste and storing the remaining material in a roughly 500-acre dry-stack Tailings Storage Facility. The company says this change would substantially reduce the mine's water use.

But community members and technical reviewers say the revised proposal does not resolve some of the biggest concerns surrounding Copper Flat – and in some cases raises new questions that regulators need to answer before deciding whether the mine should move forward.

Why this matters now

State regulators are reviewing the revised Copper Flat proposal, giving New Mexicans another opportunity to ask whether the mine can operate and be reclaimed without putting surrounding water, land, and communities at unacceptable risk.

Copper Flat is also moving forward at a time of rapidly increasing mining interest across New Mexico and the country. Federal policies are encouraging expanded domestic mineral production and fast tracking review of mining projects, while New Mexico has seen more than 12,000 new mining claims staked since 2023. That makes careful review and meaningful public participation especially important. The push for more domestic mining should not come at the expense of New Mexico's water, communities, or strong environmental protections.

Before Copper Flat moves forward, communities deserve clear answers about the water the mine will use, the waste it will leave behind, and how the site will be protected long after mining ends.

What's at stake?

- **Water** - Water remains one of the biggest concerns. The company holds approximately 1,100 acre-feet per year of groundwater rights, while its mining operation would depend heavily on repeatedly recycling water throughout the mining process. Community members have raised concerns about whether the company's projected water savings are realistic, whether it has enough water

for both mining and reclamation, and how pumping and other groundwater depletion could affect nearby wells, springs, Las Animas Creek and downstream water users.

- **Mine waste** - The revised proposal would permanently store filtered mine waste in a large Tailings Storage Facility. Engineering studies identified unanswered questions about the stability of the facility, including whether existing information about the underlying soils and the tailings themselves is sufficient to fully evaluate its long-term stability and seismic risks.
- **What happens after mining** - The questions don't end when mining does. The proposed open pit would eventually be approximately 1,000 feet deep and 2,800 feet wide. The company's reclamation plan calls for filling the pit with groundwater to limit acid formation, but the revised plan estimates that process would take more than 2.5 years rather than the few months originally envisioned. Community members are asking regulators to reconsider whether that approach adequately protects groundwater over the long term.
- **Surrounding communities** - These aren't just technical questions on a permit application. People living and working along Las Animas Creek depend on the same water resources that could be affected by the mine. The project's own updated hydrological analysis recognizes impacts from groundwater pumping and other mine-related depletion, including impacts to wells and springs near the project.