

Rosemont decision could be delayed by new procedure

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If the U.S. Forest Service doesn't deliver a decision on the proposed Rosemont Mine by Sept. 27, changes in how the agency reviews projects that are scheduled to go into effect could lead to further delays.

The Forest Service on July 1 released an administrative Environmental Impact Statement that appears to point to approval. That report launched a 30-day window for more than two dozen cooperating agencies to comment. The public, which has had several opportunities to weigh in on the project, cannot submit comments on the report.

Coronado Supervisor Jim Upchurch wants the final EIS and a Record of Decision on the mine issued by Sept. 27. That's the day the Forest Service launches a new Project-Level Predecisional Administrative Review Process that requires more public input.

"If we cannot do that (Sept. 27), we will have to notify everybody that there is a new objection process that will be implemented," Upchurch said. "If we go past that date we will have to work through the review process for the first time, essentially putting things back several months. We are trying to be expeditious regarding the needs of the proponent while being thorough. The 27th isn't a deadline and if we don't make it the process won't go belly-up."

Opponents claim Rosemont has dwindling financial resources and is under pressure to show investors it can get mine approval.

Augusta spokeswoman Letitia Cornacchia said they believe "the agencies have done a thorough and credible job," but wouldn't comment on a Sept. 27 approval date.