



155 N Morley Ave
Phone: (520) 281-0579

Nogales, Arizona 85621
Fax: (520) 281-0493

Kerwin S. Dewberry, Forest Supervisor
Coronado National Forest
ATTN: Hermosa Critical Minerals Project
300 West Congress Street
Tucson, AZ, 85701

Subject: Letter of Support for South32's Hermosa Critical Minerals Exploration and Mine Plan of Operations

Dear Mr. Dewberry,

I am writing to express my support for South32's Hermosa project as the only advanced mine development project to date in the United States that could produce two federally designated critical minerals – manganese and zinc – both of which are essential minerals for powering the nation's clean energy future.

Circles of Peace, first participated in prevention and planning community building projects with South32 Hermosa in 2020. They have been an active contributor to our community in Santa Cruz County and across Southern Arizona, bringing much needed jobs and economic opportunity to the region. Moreover, they have invested their time and resources to numerous causes that have benefitted the people in our community including funding "The Entre Amigas" mental health support program and sponsoring the Nogales Bicycle Classic event relevant to this organization.

South32 has also been responsive to community input as the Hermosa project continues to develop. They have worked with local leaders, businesses, and environmental organizations to address concerns and maximize opportunities from their investment proactively.

As a member of the community, I recognize Hermosa's potential to bring numerous benefits not only to Southern Arizona but to the entire nation, while also leading change in the industry by operating in an environmentally responsible manner.

Hermosa is being designed from the ground up with advanced technology and monitoring systems to deliver on the company's sustainability commitments and in response to community interests. With a total footprint of 750 acres, it's a fraction of the footprint of open-pit mines and even other underground mines, and its water use intensity is 75% less than other mines in the region.

South32 is a responsible neighbor in Santa Cruz County and is working closely with the community to ensure our needs and concerns are addressed as the project moves forward,



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including for water management, sustainability, and protecting our region's unique ecosystem. Wildlife and biodiversity monitoring has been ongoing at Hermosa since 2012 and South32 regularly conducts surveys for threatened and endangered plant and aquatic species, in a concerted effort to meet their goal of no-net loss for biodiversity.

In addition, Hermosa will help to transform and grow the local economy, creating good-paying jobs so the next generation have opportunities to stay in Santa Cruz County. South32 recently made a \$2.16 billion investment in Southern Arizona, representing the largest private investment in the local economy to date. Hermosa will create more than 900 family-sustaining jobs, with each job generating an average income of \$90,000 annually – over double the average household income in the county today. The project will also deliver millions annually in new tax dollars to fund public schools, community colleges, and county services. Hermosa will additionally create 1,600 indirect and induced jobs across Santa Cruz County, over 3,100 jobs across the state of Arizona, generate a cumulative \$29 million in local taxes for the county, and add nearly \$1.2 billion to Arizona's economy during construction alone.

Thank you for your consideration of our views as the Hermosa project's scoping period continues. We recognize that South32 is committed to developing Hermosa in a way that benefits the community, minimizes impact on the environment, and creates new opportunities across the region for years to come. You can contact me at bacosta@circlesofpeace.us or 520-281-0579 with any questions or to discuss this issue in more detail.

Signed,

Blanca Acosta
Executive Director
Circles of Peace