

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/7/2024 2:45:36 PM

First name: Troy

Last name: Duncan

Organization: Southwest Energy

Title: Safety, Health, Environmental Coordinator

Comments: 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 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.

As the leading commercial explosives experts in the Western United States, Southwest Energy LLC. is committed to delivering safe, efficient, and value driven fragmentation results to South 32's Hermosa Project.

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, 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 strengthen our domestic supply of critical minerals to reduce our reliance on foreign sources, reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions by removing the need to transport these materials abroad, and combat human rights risks by producing these materials safely and sustainably here in the United States with strong labor and environmental protections. Right now, the US is 100% reliant on foreign sources for manganese and produces just 6% of the world's zinc at a single mine in Alaska that is nearing the end of its service life. Hermosa has the potential to responsibly boost our nation's critical mineral security.

Thank you for your consideration of our views as the Hermosa project's NEPA process continues. You can contact me at (see attached letter) with any questions or to discuss this issue in more detail.

Signed,

Troy Duncan

Southwest Energy LLC.