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Organization:

Title:

Comments: 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.

Born and raised in Tucson, AZ, I have a special love for the Patagonia mountains. As a child, my family often picnicked at Patagonia Lake or explored and hunted in the Harshaw area (35B). I continue to take my own family and grandchildren to this beautiful area. I also understand the need for sustainable mining. I have worked in marketing for mining vendors for 30 years (Mintec/MineSight, FLSmidth, Eclipse Mining Technologies).

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. This is of utmost importance to me because of the biodiversity of the area.

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 of biodiversity.

In addition, South32 has proven its commitment to sustainability, perhaps most tangibly demonstrated through a \$30 million cleanup of mine waste left by a previous miner at the site - saving taxpayers money, protecting the natural environment, and stopping heavy metals leaching from legacy tailings and waste rock sites from polluting local waterways, both now and in the future. We appreciate the Hermosa project's commitment to building the site with a sustainability-first mindset, which includes powering the mine with renewable energy and utilizing state-of-the-art electrified equipment.

In addition, Hermosa will help to transform and grow the local economy, creating good-paying jobs so the next generation has 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 considering our views as the Hermosa project's NEPA process continues.

