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Comments: I speak on behalf of my family, the local small business I am part of and AMIGOS, a group advocating for safe, responsible mining and the jobs it brings to our state.

The main product of the South32 mine will be manganese. Manganese is used to produce modern, high strength steel, corrosion-resistant aluminum alloys and many electronic components. It's essential to our economy and our American way of life.

Currently, the world's top suppliers are Brazil, India, China, South Africa and Kazakhstan. Sound familiar? They're B, I, C and S of BRICS and the 5th shares borders with Russia and China - hardly countries Americans can count on to supply a vital mineral in tough times.

Not only will South32 provide a reliable supply of manganese, zinc and other metals, but it has already - here and now, before the mine was built - solved a major issue in this area.

By remediating waste and acidic water from old mines abandoned in the distant past, South32 has ensured that Harshaw Creek's water is a benefit to the area, not a threat to wildlife and health.

South32 did this voluntarily, at their expense, in cooperation with the state of Arizona. The state of the art treatment systems produce water as clean as most drinking water, as well as cutting edge jobs for people who would otherwise have to leave the area to find this kind of opportunity.

South32 also took heed of the major complaint put forth by residents of the area - increased truck traffic through Patagonia and along Harshaw Road. South32's solution? Build, at their expense, a more direct route to Hwy 82 through Flux Canyon. It totally bypasses Patagonia and eliminates most traffic on Harshaw Road.

The proposed Flux Canyon road, unlike Harshaw Road, is designed for continuous heavy truck traffic, saving taxpayers not only the cost of a new road but also the maintenance and improvement costs associated with keeping Harshaw Road (not designed for heavy trucks) open. The new road will be built and maintained by companies hiring workers from the area.

When the mine opens, we can expect more jobs like these - good quality jobs that can raise families and build communities.

No longer will the working people of Santa Cruz Country have to choose between staying in the place they love while suffering on minimum wage, or moving away to enjoy a decent standard of living.

South32 will provide some of these jobs, and many thousands more will be provided by companies in AMIGOS who provide mining companies with the goods and services they need. If you're a local business looking to work more closely with the mining industry, I'd encourage you to check us out.

The AMIGOS member company I work for (Arizona Pump & Machine of Tucson) pays above what other industries do and has competitive benefits - 401k, health, vision, dental insurance and more. We offer apprenticeships so young people can learn marketable skills that pay far more than other fields, putting them on the path to generational wealth instead of desperation and perpetual debt.

Many other companies serving Arizona's mining industry do the same and more for our state's workforce.

I've spent most of my career in mining. The mining industry is a blessing that has enabled my family and many others to live the American dream - the opportunity to work hard and leave a better world behind.

A co-worker's son will be starting college this fall - debt free, his degree paid for by mining. Isn't this what we want for all Arizonans? This is the kind of opportunity that mining brings - please consider this when evaluating the Hermosa Mine Project.