

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/23/2024 5:31:15 PM

First name: Pat

Last name: Poulsen

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I wholeheartedly agree with the multiple requests from the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, the Patagonia Mayor's office, and Congressman Raul Grijalva to extend the public comment period a minimum 90 days. The majority of county residents speak only Spanish and need the available information regarding this project in Spanish so they can have equal input. The extreme community opposition to the project suggests extended community input is needed, as requested.

I have many concerns regarding the Hermosa project run by South 32 including the following:

1. Water usage, quality, and monitoring

The mine will use between 1.8 and 3.2 million gallons daily for operational purposes. Then nearly 6.5 million gallons will be discharged into Harshaw Creek and Alum Gulch in a process called DEWATERING TO ACCESS THE ORE. This water is from an ancient aquifer and can never be replaced.

b. South 32 will be self monitoring and reporting which based on the past track record of South 32, could possibly lead to false information.

c. Erosion and downstream contamination concerns have not been adequately addressed.

2. Air quality

a. Continued concerns about air quality

b. Data is not factual but strictly model based.

3. Traffic

a. Increased truck traffic on local roads

b. Congestion, danger from spills, accidents, track out.

The major highways 82 & 83 are already dangerous. They are also heavily used by bicyclists who don't always pay attention and often times ride side by side in the middle of the road. A prime target for the extra large mining trucks that use the roads, most often exceeding the speed limits. Harshaw Rd which will be widely used by many trucks can barely handle normal day to day traffic - several hundred trucks per day will be a disaster to the road itself as well as the normal traffic that occurs.

4. Biodiversity

Threat to over 100 endangered species from noise and habitat destruction including Jaguar, yellow billed cuckoo, and the Mexican spotted owl. The mine is in the heart of the Sky Islands, one of the most unique biodiverse places in earth. The damage to the mountains themselves is very disheartening.

5. Economic threat

a. Nature based economy will be compromised - Patagonia has one of the largest gravel mountain biking areas in our county and one of the most unique birdwatching regions in the world.

b. Nature based business such as campgrounds, hiking, and dude ranches will all be affected.

6. Public health threat

a. Lead and manganese are heavy metals and are proven toxic to human health. Lead is regulated by the EPA, but Manganese is not and has proven to be a neurotoxin in humans. These contaminating heavy metals will end up in our air, water, and soil. Our State Representative Stephanie Stahl-Hamilton has submitted a piece of

legislation to regulate manganese like lead is regulated. It is stuck in committee because of bad politics and lack of concern for the citizens of Arizona. The mining lobby is very powerful and has no regard to the public.

8. Proposed New Transmission line

a. This is a huge fire danger. Homeowners insurance is already doubling and tripling due to the dry climate and all of the desert brush.

9. Environmental justice concerns

- a. Worker health and well-being will be compromised.
- b. Resident health and well-being will be compromised.
- c. Wildlife health and well-being will be compromised.

In conclusion, I am dead set against South32 proceeding with their Hermosa project. My opinion is based on their horrific track record on other mining projects around the world. The citizens, watchdog groups and environmentalists have been doing a tremendous amount of research on South32, most of which show how uncaring the company is to the area in which their projects resides. While they shower us with money and glowing promises, it's all a horse and pony show. They don't care about the community at all.

Respectfully,

Pat Poulsen