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Title:

Comments: I am opposed to the Hermosa Project in the Patagonia Mountains for many reasons. This comment will be focused on the water issues that concern me.

Dewatering the mountain when we are already in a drought is criminal. This will affect the reservoir that supplies the residents in the area as well as the flora and fauna that rely on springs for survival. This will also cause a cone of depression the size of which is not known. Releasing large amounts of water back into the mountain as well as into Harshaw Creek will have unknown effects on erosion and flood control as well as stir up residue from previous mining activity.

You claim that you are plugging in values that South 32 gives to you in order to reach your findings regarding the possible effects of the mining process on the surrounding environment. First of all, you are trusting South 32 to be accurate and truthful about the values they give you and I believe that is a mistake. What are the consequences if South 32 uses more water than they claim they will as they have done in other countries? What happens if the water supply is polluted by their processes? They get to self monitor and self report so are there any consequences? South 32 is trying to control the narrative so that they can claim to be such great stewards of the water but it is really just a sham.

This is not happening in a vacuum so what happens at the mine site will affect many other areas. Is South 32 going to be held accountable for problems that occur miles away from the mine site? What would that look like? A fine? A promise from them to do better? Meanwhile, our county and our lives will be left in ruins.

Next, I do not believe that models will be able to replicate Mother Nature. How are you going to know how much water to put back into the mountain and how much to release into Harshaw Creek? How do you know what will happen once South 32 backfills their holes with other materials? My concern is that once the damage is done, it cannot be fixed.

You are dealing with people's lives as well as an extremely biodiverse area of our country and the stakes are high. This whole project is a disaster waiting to happen if you approve permitting for the Hermosa Project. South 32 will take all of the water, ruin the entire area, take the minerals, make money off of the destruction and leave without more than a slap on the wrist.

This process needs to be slowed down and we need more time to look at the Hermosa Project POO before we are required to comment. This comment period needs to be extended to 90 days. There is too much at stake here to rush this through.