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Comments: I am writing to share concerns and provide feedback to Coronado National Forest regarding permitting of South 32's Hermosa Project in the Patagonia Mountains. I am particularly concerned about the possibility of the project given the region's status as a global biodiversity hotspot (the Patagonia Mountains are home to more than 100 threatened, endangered, and sensitive species) in the "Sky Islands" and the border region. We can not sacrifice this irreplaceable landscape to mining, even as we work to mitigate climate change.

The area is home to a recreational economy that depends on the preservation of the ecosystem. Increased truck traffic, noise, and light pollution, and impacts to flora and fauna can all impact this recreation economy.

Critically, in an area that has already seen its water resources devastated, dewatering and the loss of groundwater poses too great of a risk to our future. Discharging water into Harshaw Creek is a threat to a sensitive ecosystem already at risk from climate change. The cumulative impact of these changes and the mine's operations in the context of other operations in the region is unknown, and poses a danger to the Patagonia region's unique biodiversity.

The Hermosa mine and South 32 are receiving unique federal support as the only hardrock mine included in Fast41. This federal support was given in advance of environmental review because the aim of Fast41 is to reduce permitting times, but that is no excuse to forgo robust environmental analysis-- the Forest Service should follow the UN Guiding Principles.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.