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Organization:

Title:

Comments: June 2, 2024

Kerwin S. Dewberry, Forest Supervisor
Coronado National Forest
ATTN: Hermosa Critical Minerals Project
300 West Congress St
Tucson AZ 85701

Re: Letter of Support for South32's Hermosa Critical Minerals Exploration and Mine Plan of Operations

Dear Mr. Dewberry,

This letter is to express my support for South32's Hermosa project.

As a member of the community, I see the significant benefits of what the Hermosa project is bringing and can continue to bring to Southern Arizona. When South32 came into the area, they knew they would have to build trust and confidence within the community. They did so in 2020 when they invested in our community by cleaning up the mine waste left by a previous miner at the site. This cleanup helped protect the natural environment and stopped heavy metals from polluting the local waterways.

The US has a goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. The Hermosa project has the potential to provide the necessary manganese needed to meet the US's demand for electric vehicle batteries. This is essential for our country to be able to produce our own minerals and not depend on foreign suppliers. But what does this mean for southern Arizona? This means stable, high-paying jobs for our community. Currently, as our kids graduate, they travel north to seek further education and/or better employment opportunities. All the while, our border community starves for new talent and ideas. South32 can change that. They have been instrumental in southern Arizona by investing millions of dollars in social service projects, key infrastructure improvements, and support for STEM education programs for school-aged children. In addition, South32 created a Workplace Development Taskforce to help identify the skills needed to help train, develop, and expand the region's workforce. This is what southern Arizona needs to transform the area's economy and become a driving force in the state.

I respectfully submit my comments for your consideration.

My best,
Irene Coppola