

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/6/2024 1:24:17 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am opposed to the Hermosa Project in the Patagonia Mountains for many reasons. This comment will be focused on the impact on our ecotourism that concerns me.

Patagonia already has a strong ecotourism market. They enjoy tourism dollars from birders, bikers, people visiting wineries, backcountry enthusiasts and people traveling the scenic highways in the region. How will increasing the traffic exponentially and putting large mining trucks carrying toxic materials on those highways affect tourism? Negatively. How will the traffic affect the scenic roads that people enjoy? What about the wildlife that people come to see? All negatively. There is absolutely no positive effect on tourism in this scenario.

This mine will chase the tourism dollars away and kill the economy of Patagonia. How will they survive? Is the mine going to keep the entire economy alive? I sincerely doubt that but, even if it did temporarily, what happens when the money from the minerals is gone and the mine shuts down? What happens to the town then? Is South 32 going to keep supporting the residents of the town? The environment will be ruined by that point so there will no longer be any ecotourism.

This mine is a disaster both in the short and long term. What about South32's desire to build a manganese processing plant in the county? How will that help our ecotourism? I'm sure tourists will flock to our county when they learn about the contaminated water and air. Rio Rico is also working on ecotourism plans. Now you will ruin 2 towns in the county if you let this mine continue destroying the environment. We want to protect the Santa Cruz River and highlight its historical significance, not destroy it. How will South 32 and the Hermosa Project help us achieve this goal? How will it help us bring tourists to our town?

What happens when we have a disaster happen with a mining truck or a rail car? We've already had a mountain biker hit by a truck which was trying to repair the road damage from mining vehicles. How often will this (or something worse) happen? Our county does not have the emergency services to deal with toxic spills and / or accidents involving heavy trucks. Is South 32 going to build a hospital here? Are they going to pay for the emergency personnel? This whole mine is a disaster waiting to happen. Why can't you see this? The cons significantly outweigh any pros that might be there.

I worry every day about the future of our county since the federal government fast tracked this endeavor and we need the USFS to step up and tell the White House that this project is a huge mistake. Please restore my faith in your organization and stop letting foreign companies steal our resources. We need those resources both for our quality of life and so that we have a planet for generations to come. Don't sell them off to the highest bidder.

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. At the very least, the POO needs to be in Spanish. This comment period needs to be extended to 90 days. There is too much at stake here to rush this through.