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First name: Kelly

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Kerwin S. Dewberry, Forest Supervisor

Coronado National Forest

ATTN: Hermosa Critical Minerals Project

300 West Congress Street

Tucson, AZ, 85701

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

Dear Mr. Dewberry,

I am writing to express my support for South32's Hermosa project as the only advanced mine development project in the United States that could produce two federally designated critical minerals - manganese and zinc - both of which are essential minerals for powering the nation's clean energy future.

I am a native Arizonan, and I believe that this project will provide a positive impact, locally, statewide and nationally. Arizona has been one of the few states that has always provided for the future of the nation, and should continue to do so.

As a member of the community, I recognize Hermosa's potential to bring numerous benefits not only to Southern Arizona but to the entire nation, while also leading change in the industry by operating in an environmentally responsible manner.

Hermosa is being designed from the ground up with advanced technology and monitoring systems to deliver on the company's sustainability commitments and in response to community interests. With a total footprint of 750 acres, it's a fraction of the footprint of open-pit mines and even other underground mines, and its water use intensity is 75% less than other mines in the region.

South32 is a responsible neighbor in Santa Cruz County and is working closely with the community to ensure our needs and concerns are addressed as the project moves forward, including for water management, sustainability, and protecting our region's unique ecosystem. Wildlife and biodiversity monitoring has been ongoing at Hermosa since 2012 and South32 regularly conducts surveys for threatened and endangered plant and aquatic species, in a concerted effort to meet their goal of no-net loss for biodiversity.

In addition, South32 has proven its commitment to sustainability, perhaps most tangibly demonstrated through a \$30 million cleanup of mine waste left by a previous miner at the site - saving taxpayers money, protecting the natural environment and stopping heavy metals leaching from legacy tailings and waste rock sites from polluting local waterways, both now and in the future. We appreciate the Hermosa project's commitment to building the site with a sustainability-first mindset including powering the mine by renewable energy and utilizing state-of-the-art electrified equipment.

Thank you for your consideration of our views as the Hermosa project's NEPA process continues. You can contact me at [yllekb2000@yahoo.com](mailto:yllekb2000@yahoo.com) or 520 878 3832 with any questions or to discuss this issue in more detail.

Signed,

Kelly B Proctor