Comments: To Dr. Mary I. Vanis

President, Santa Cruz Valley Citizens Council

 Public Comment

There are many reasons why the South 32 Hermosa Mine Project should not be allowed to operate anywhere in Santa Cruz County particularly in Nogales or anywhere along the Nogales Wash and the Santa Cruz River to include Rio Rico, Carmen, Tumacacori and Tubac.

Air quality is already a major issue. On a daily basis, there is a lot of traffic and congestion from international commerce and the smoke and pollution from the diesel trucks is obvious. In addition, there is smoke and pollution that comes from Nogales Sonora especially the landfill in Mexico that is often on fire.

Also, water is another major concern. Past water studies have identified an aquifer that courses underground from Nogales past Green Valley. Everyone is tapping into the aquifer and the ground water levels are steadily going down. This is a major concern when considering allowing any new operations to tap into the same water source. The water that is available to the residents of the Santa Cruz Valley is precious and limited.

Of course, clean and environmentally responsible industry should be welcome in the area but a mining operation that could process material directly on or near the river should not be allowed. A chemical spill from that operation could endanger not only the river but the aquifer as well. Such a chemical spill would be disastrous eventually flowing north and endangering the drinking water of north Nogales, Rio Rico, Carmen Tumacacori and Tubac.

In summary, the Santa Cruz Valley from Nogales to North of Tubac is a beautiful riparian area and it has incredible potential. It is enjoyed by hikers, walkers, bikers, runners and horseback riders. Even now it is a mecca for birdwatchers. Let's commit to keeping this wonderful riparian area environmentally safe and clean for future generations to enjoy.

Daniel and Kristine Fontes