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Comments: The Hermosa Mine project is receiving preferential treatment (FAST-41) permitting due to its status with the U.S. government as a mine which will produce manganese and zinc, both identified by the U.S. Geological Service as "critical minerals".

Per the South32 Hermosa Critical Minerals Exploration and Mine Plan of Operations - 1.3.2 Project Overview :

"The development and increased production of domestic supplies of critical minerals is a stated priority of prior and current U.S. Administrations, as evidenced by recent directives of the Defense Production Act invoked in 2022, the Infrastructure Investment Act and Jobs Act of 2021, and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 to bolster the production of critical minerals essential for national security, infrastructure, transportation, power generation systems, and environmental initiatives."

There are many environmental negatives associated with this project, including massive depletion of groundwater. The applicant attempts to apply the critical minerals status to the mine products as a positive counterweight in the public perception to the multiple negative impacts of this mine.

Where is it guaranteed that the minerals produced by this mine, from U.S. soil and deemed critical to the nation, will remain in the U.S., to be used in the U.S.?

If there is no such guarantee, is the Forest Service willing to approve the extraction of material from the natural resources it oversees, and deemed strategically critical to the United States, to be sold abroad to profit a foreign corporation?