

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/11/2024 3:58:32 AM

First name: Caleb

Last name: Weaver

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the US Forest Service's actions regarding Hermosa Mine in the Patagonia Mountains of southeastern Arizona. I am a landowner and business owner living within Patagonia, Arizona. The location of the Australia-based South32's Hermosa Mine is within the Patagonia Municipal Watershed, the watershed that supports Patagonia's groundwater. Therefore, the impact of the mine will directly benefit my living, wellbeing, and economic outlook.

I am a practicing ecologist who received degrees in Ecology/Evolutionary Biology and Geosciences at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona - which happens to be downstream of the mine within the same watershed. I also own an LLC that is based in Patagonia. The Patagonia Mountains are within one of the three most biodiverse locations within the entire United States. The Critical Environmental Protection Fund has identified the Madrean Pine-Oak Woodlands as one of 36 most biologically diverse yet threatened terrestrial areas on Earth. The Hermosa Mine is within this biological hotspot. I urge the Forest Service to consider and value biodiversity in its decision making process.

I have serious concerns for the impact of the Hermosa Mine on the human, economic, and environmental health. The decisions made by the US Forest Service will directly impact me, my neighbors, and local wildlife - including critically endangered plant and animal species.

Please include the following in the US Forest Service studies:

- impact of dewatering the Patagonia Mountains to water supply and economics of residents
- impact of dewatering the Patagonia Mountains to insurance of Patagonia residents, many of whom already live within the FEMA floodplains
- impact of dewatering the Patagonia Mountains to local wildlife, including the following threatened and endangered species: Sonora Tiger Salamander, Chiricahua Leopard Frog, Yellow-Billed Cuckoo, Mexican Spotted Owl, Ocelot, Lesser Long-Nosed Bat, Jaguar, Huachuca Water-Umbel, and the Northern Mexican Gartersnake
- impact of dewatering the Patagonia Mountains to wildfire hazard, and the impact of fire on human and nonhuman populations