

# MEDIA RELEASE

July 5, 2023



## **SOUTH32'S HERMOSA PROJECT RECEIVES FROM FAST-41 PROPOSED PERMITTING TIMETABLE TO PRODUCE TWO CRITICAL MINERALS**

The Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council (FPISC), an independent federal agency, today [published](#) the proposed comprehensive, integrated permitting timetable for South32's Hermosa project. As is standard, this update comes 60-days after Hermosa was announced as the first mining project to be covered by FAST-41 in May 2023.

As Hermosa is located on private lands, only a handful of state permits from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality are required for initial development. However, we do anticipate the need of federal environmental reviews and a NEPA process for full development of the project.

Today's permitting timetable from FPISC includes intermediate and final completion dates for all federal environmental reviews and authorizations for full project development, as well as a list of cooperating agencies. Their proposed permitting timetable projects Hermosa will happen in three phases: Hermosa's Mine Plan of Operations will be submitted and approved by December 2023; Hermosa's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process - from notice of intent (NOI), public comment periods, and final EIS publishing - will occur over the course of 2024 and 2025, and federal authorization for full development will occur in 2026.

The Hermosa project, located in Southern Arizona, is currently the only advanced mine development project in the US that could produce two USGS-designated critical minerals – manganese and zinc – which are essential minerals for powering the world's clean energy future. In fact, Hermosa is the only advanced project in the US that has a viable pathway to produce battery-grade manganese to help the rapidly growing North American electric vehicle supply chain.

South32 Hermosa President Pat Risner said: "The process to authorize full development reflects that stakeholders will be coordinated at the outset of project development. We welcome FAST-41 building on the NEPA process of providing stakeholders with increased transparency, real-time information that is publicly available on the Permitting Dashboard, and multiple opportunities over the next few years to give feedback. Since our inception, the Hermosa project has actively sought out, and has already incorporated, community feedback on the project's planning and design."

He added: "We are committed to working closely with the U.S. Forest Service, cooperating agencies, tribes and local stakeholders to develop this project in a way that benefits the community, minimizes impact on the environment and grows the economy."

**ENDS**

### **Background on FAST-41**

Adding projects like Hermosa to FAST-41 supports the nation's decarbonization goals by creating a more efficient and transparent federal permitting process for projects that have potential to supply the critical minerals needed for a low-carbon future.

To qualify for the FAST-41 process complex critical infrastructure projects must meet rigorous criteria to demonstrate benefit to the nation.

Title 41 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act ([FAST Act](#)), or FAST-41, was signed into law by President Obama in December 2015 to create a more efficient and transparent process for complex, critical infrastructure projects.

The FAST Act also created the FPISC, an independent federal agency composed of [16 members](#), including 13 federal agencies responsible for environmental reviews and permitting for infrastructure projects. The Permitting Council facilitates deliberate, coordinated, and transparent federal environmental review and permitting for certain "covered" infrastructure projects.

To qualify for review under Title 41 of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act — or the FAST-41 program — infrastructure projects must meet certain, rigorous criteria to demonstrate how they will benefit the nation.

A FAST-41 covered project must first be in one of the following [18 sectors](#) and it also must also meet one of the [four criteria areas](#): Objective, Discretionary, Tribal, or Carbon Capture. South32's Hermosa project meets two criteria areas — the Objective Criteria and Discretionary Criteria.

Once a project is [covered by FAST-41](#), it is placed on the [Permitting Dashboard](#), allowing federal agencies, project sponsors, other stakeholders, and the public to track project reviews and permitting in real time.

### **About the Hermosa project**

Located in a historic mining district in the Patagonia Mountains of Southern Arizona, South32's Hermosa project is currently 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. To learn more, visit: [www.south32hermosa.com](http://www.south32hermosa.com).

### **About South32**

South32 is a globally diversified mining and metals company. Our purpose is to make a difference by developing natural resources, improving people's lives now and for generations to come. We are trusted by our owners and partners to realise the potential of their resources. We produce commodities including bauxite, alumina, aluminium, copper, silver, lead, zinc, nickel, metallurgical coal and manganese from our operations in Australia, Southern Africa and South America. With a focus on growing our base metals exposure, we also have two development options in North America and several partnerships with junior explorers around the world.

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