

MEDIA RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U.S. FOREST SERVICE BEGINS SOUTH32 HERMOSA PROJECT FEDERAL PERMITTING PROCESS WITH PUBLIC SCOPING PERIOD

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) today began the South32 Hermosa project's federal permitting process by kicking off the environmental review required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Called the "scoping process," the federal government published a [Notice of Intent \(NOI\)](#) to share South32's project plans and provide multiple opportunities for community members to provide input and publicly comment on the scope of analysis and issues the USFS should consider and analyze as a part of its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Hermosa Critical Minerals Project.

Interested community members can submit comments related to the scope of the NEPA review via mail, [online](#), or in person (in writing) at planned public scoping meetings. Public comments will be received through June 10, 2024. The Forest Service is hosting public scoping meetings in Patagonia and Nogales on May 20th and 21st, respectively and will also set up a virtual scoping meeting for community members and stakeholders to participate and learn more about the project. An updated version of our Plan of Operations and meeting details are publicly available on the USFS's Coronado National Forest [website](#).

While all of Hermosa's mining will be done from private lands and require several state permits to begin initial development, a federal permit is required to fully develop the project. The scoping process is specifically focused on the scope of the environmental analysis, alternatives that meet the purpose and need of the project, and receiving information that will help the USFS understand and analyze environmental effects of the project's proposed expansion of ancillary infrastructure onto Forest Service lands.

Hermosa is currently the only advanced mining project in the United States capable of producing two federally designated critical minerals – zinc and manganese. It is the first mining project covered by the FAST-41 program for critical infrastructure projects that benefit the nation, which enables open lines of communication and transparency between all stakeholders while ensuring a robust and rigorous review process.

"South32's Hermosa project aims to set a new standard for sustainable mining, with advanced technology. Because we are building it from the ground up, it is being designed to minimize environmental impact, including operating on a limited surface footprint, using approximately 75 percent less water than other mines in the region and achieving the goal of no-net loss for biodiversity," said Brent Musslewhite, Hermosa project Director of Permitting and Approvals.

"Hermosa represents the largest private investment in Southern Arizona's history, and our goal is to design a project that benefits the region now and for generations to come. That's why we encourage community members to participate in the Forest Service's public comment process. Working together, we can strengthen the domestic supply of critical minerals needed for clean energy technologies and national defense, reduce America's reliance on foreign countries and transform the local economy, bringing hundreds of new good-paying jobs," Musslewhite added.



Federal authorization is expected to take over two more years and will include multiple rounds of public feedback and discussion.

A video overview of the project's proposed expansion of ancillary infrastructure onto Forest Service lands is available [here](#). Should community members have any questions, please feel free to contact askhermosa@south32.net or visit the [FAST-41 dashboard](#) to track the Hermosa project's permitting in real time.

ENDS

About the South32 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. Learn more at www.south32hermosa.com.

Hermosa is a polymetallic development comprised of a zinc-lead-silver sulfide deposit, a battery-grade manganese deposit and an extensive, highly prospective land package with the potential for further polymetallic and copper mineralization.

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