



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Progress on Community Protection and Benefit Agreement for Hermosa Project

February 26, 2025 - Representatives from Santa Cruz County, Nogales, Patagonia, and South32 are working together to develop a Community Protection and Benefit Agreement (CPBA) for the Hermosa project. Through regular working sessions, the group is focused on creating an agreement that ensures the project is developed, operated, and closed with sustainable protections and benefits for the community.

The group of representatives is considering addressing key areas, including:

- Governance
- Benefits
- Data & Third Party Input
- Monitoring & Corrections Mechanisms
- Community Feedback Mechanism
- Dispute Resolution and
- Changes & Updates.

The CPBA is designed to complement, not duplicate, existing regulatory requirements. The basics of the CPBA process are outlined in the primer below.

**To ensure community voices are heard in the development of the CPBA, representatives from Santa Cruz County, Nogales, Patagonia, and South32 invite residents to participate in two upcoming Community Listening & Engagement Sessions:**

- **March 17 – Patagonia High School, 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM**
- **March 18 – Americana Hotel, Nogales, 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM**

**These sessions provide an opportunity for residents to share their perspectives and offer feedback on key topics related to the CPBA. While representatives will be there to listen, these sessions are not structured as Q&A forums. Instead, all input gathered will be reviewed**



**and considered as part of the agreement’s ongoing development. Snacks and refreshments will be provided.**

For those unable to attend, additional information is available and input can be shared at <https://cpba-hermosa.org/>

Residents of the County are encouraged to leave a comment and respond to the survey on this website – this will help the representatives take community feedback into consideration in further development of the CPBA.

#### **CPBA Quick Facts:**

- The Community Protection and Benefit Agreement (CPBA) is a legally-binding agreement.
- There are four Signatories to the agreement: the area’s three municipalities – Santa Cruz County, Town of Patagonia, City of Nogales, and the mining operator South32.
- This is a voluntary, not a regulatory, agreement (i.e., no Signatory, including South32, is required to sign it).
- Signatories are using a consensus process to make decisions. A consensus process means that rather than voting to make decisions, the Signatories must come to a consensus on how to move forward on issues related to the agreement.
- Two Signatories have provided additional capacity to the Signatory group to support work on the agreement (Santa Cruz County and South32).
- [Acorn International](#) is facilitating this process with a commitment to serve as an independent facilitator working in the best interest of all Signatories relative to the CPBA.
- Other entities and experts as needed may also be involved to support the process, for instance the University of Arizona which is conducting a data study.
- South32 is funding some, but not all, aspects of this process. South32-funded efforts include Acorn International facilitation and University of Arizona data studies.



- Processes like these can take years to complete – this process was initiated by a community panel in 2023.
- The CPBA will be a living document, updated and amended as needed.
- Signatories are working collaboratively to create a draft agreement. The draft agreement will go through extensive legal review before it will be ready to sign.
- The terms of the CPBA will be negotiated between the four Signatories. Public input is valued during agreed upon points in the process so Signatories can remain informed.
- Engagement with external constituents and other stakeholders is done collectively as the Signatory group, not individually by each Signatory.
- Engagement plans, like all other decisions, must be agreed upon by the Signatories using a consensus process.
- For Santa Cruz County, each of the three Districts/Supervisors has a voice in prioritizing issues related to the agreement.

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