

Reed Spurling

Dear Arizona Department of Environmental Quality,

I am writing to express my opposition to South32's requested permit (#AZ0026387) for removing water from the water table around the site of their proposed Hermosa project. As a planetary science student I have a basic understanding of groundwater and stream flow, so it is clear to me that South32's proposed actions would cause irreversible harm to the land and ecology around their project site. Removing large amounts of groundwater from a single area will lower the water level in a large radius around that area, drying up springs that provide habitats for endemic species, and killing plants whose roots were previously long enough to reach the water below them. We see this already at other sites around Arizona with significant groundwater pumping, where even mesquites with their very long roots can struggle to reach water. Such actions are unsustainable, and will decrease the land's ability to support future generations of Arizonans.

Additionally, South32's proposed discharges of large amounts of water into streams formed by smaller amounts of water would cause erosion, negatively affecting streambank ecology and reducing the landscape's overall resilience.

These proposed impacts are unacceptable, so I urge the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality to deny the permit for this project.

Sincerely,

Reed Spurling,

Arizona resident