

Olivia Fehlberg

South32 is actively pursuing the development of the Hermosa project, an ambitious underground mine. However, the commencement of operations hinges on the initial step of pumping the area dry, a move that could have severe consequences. The estimated 1,900-foot drop in groundwater levels surrounding the mine poses a significant threat to hundreds of springs nourished by that water.

Should approval be granted, the proposed groundwater pumping raises alarming concerns about the reckless use of water resources. A staggering 6 million gallons per day would be discharged into Harshaw Creek, with an additional 172,000 gallons per day directed into Alum Creek. This consistent influx of colossal water volumes not only jeopardizes numerous springs but also irreversibly alters the landscape. The potential repercussions extend beyond ecological concerns, as the groundwater pumping poses a risk of flooding in the town of Patagonia, endangering homes and businesses.

The picturesque Patagonia mountains near the Arizona-Mexico border are now confronted with an impending wave of mining activities that threatens to inflict profound and irreversible damage upon one of our nation's vital biodiversity hotspots.

This surge in mining initiatives is primarily instigated by foreign mining companies seeking to capitalize on potential riches without regard for the local residents and their sustainable way of life. The region, known for its reliance on recreational activities and the water-rich mountain ecosystem sustaining remarkable biodiversity, faces a perilous transformation due to these indiscriminate mining pursuits.