

Susan Husband

I'm writing to urge you to deny South32's Hermosa permit (#AZ0026387) for discharge of mine water into Harshaw and Alum creeks.

This issue highlights the difficult choices we are faced with and the ironic, and often unintended consequences of our efforts to make environmentally conscious decisions. Currently there is a lot of pressure on policy makers and business executives to embrace and promote actions that will decrease climate change, and the search for metal resources such as copper, cadmium, zinc and other elements found at this location, is at a fevered pitch. The unfortunate truth is that in our attempts to stave off environmental harm in one area we create it in other ways.

There is nothing more precious to our planet, and life on our planet, than water. It is said that we are in the middle of a 20 year drought because it has been going on that long – it could be a 50 or 100 year drought. Faced with this knowledge it is critical that we conserve and use wisely our precious water resources . How can we (actually you) allow ground water to be removed and flushed away to make room for extremely destructive mining activity.

I have read the figure of more than 6 million gallons of water per day! Can this be true! Such a volume of transference would dewater the surrounding area and create a cone of depression, drying springs, killing vegetation, leaving animal life without the resources they need. Further damage will be done when the removed water is then flushed down Harshaw Creek and Alum Creek. I believe a moonscape would be the result of this action with the die-off the plants near the mine and the erosion of land downstream.

In addition, these mountains are a biological hot spot, a place where the ecology of the Sierra Madre and the Rocky Mountains come together, resulting in many plants and animals found no where else in the U.S. These rare plants and animals, especially birds, draw scientists, artists, visitors of all types to this remote part of the state and the financial resources they bring are critical to the economy. Unlike mining, they do not cause destruction and devastation when they leave and no Superfund millions are needed to clean up after them.

In Arizona's past the mining interests always benefited. I hope we can move past that. Please consider the many aspects, not just mining but also ecology, economy and sustainability in making your decision. Much is at stake.

Respectfully,
Susan Husband