Mining and Sustainable Development: Oxymoron or R\textsubscript{X} for a Bright Future?

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ABSTRACT

This presentation attempts to answer the often asked question of whether metal mining (defined broadly to incorporate mining, beneficiation, smelting and refining) is compatible with the concept of sustainable development. Starting with the classic Brundtland Commission definition of sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” it makes the case that mining can and should be sustainable, using examples of sustainable mining practices at ASARCO LLC, an integrated U.S primary copper producer. These examples cover the entire mining cycle starting with exploration, operation, closure and post-closure and post mining land use. We are hopeful that the presentation will challenge the industry to even greater innovation as future projects are planned.