

July 5, 2022

Robert Grosvenor  
Gardiner Ranger District  
PO Box 5  
Gardiner, MT 59030  
Attention: East Boulder Mine Amendment 004 EIS

Dear Mr. Grosvenor:

As a fourth-generation Montanan, I'm writing to support Sibanye-Stillwater's proposal for the next phase of tailings and waste rock storage at the East Boulder Mine (Amendment 004). The mine provides critical minerals which are essential to the economic/national security of this nation. The palladium and platinum provided by the mine are critical components within motor vehicle catalytic converters, which enable cleaner, safer air through emissions reduction. Sibanye-Stillwater's Montana operations (consisting of the East Boulder Mine, Stillwater Mine, and Metallurgical Complex) have not only provided these rare earth metals for necessary applications, but have done so responsibly over several decades.

The proposed Lewis Gulch tailings storage facility (TSF) meets or exceeds all engineering design, operating, and closure planning requirements in the Montana Metal Mines Reclamation Act. An Independent Review Panel, consisting of tailings management experts who review and audit TSFs around the world, has approved the Lewis Gulch TSF design and associated plans. In addition, the proposed Dry Fork waste rock storage area will be lined and include an underdrain system for the protection of area water resources. The application of lining waste rock is a leading-practice that exceeds regulatory requirements.

Finally, an evaluation of Sibanye-Stillwater's economic impact on Montana was conducted by the University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research. The 2021 data show that Sibanye-Stillwater's Montana operations contribute:

- 1) More than \$6 Billion to Montana's annual economy,
- 2) Approximately \$295 million of total state tax and non-tax revenues annually,
- 3) Employment of nearly 2,000 people with an average compensation more than double the state average, and
- 4) Expenditures on purchases exceeding \$430 million with nearly \$225 million of purchases within Montana.

Imagine the effects on the state and local economies without this annual expenditure and tax base. It's difficult to comprehend, but it's safe to say the effects would be dramatic on the surrounding communities – both families and businesses alike.

I appreciate your time and the opportunity to provide public input.

Sincerely,

David Johnson



Gardiner Ranger District  
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JUL 18 2022

Custer Gallatin National Forest 