

To whom it may concern at the U.S. Forest Service:

In the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act (Pub. L. 117-58, Nov. 15, 2021, 135 Stat. 961), Section 40206, Congress has directed the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to identify measures "that would increase the timeliness of permitting activities for the . . . development of domestic critical minerals." Permitting the Stibnite Gold Project represents one of those clear opportunities. The Project has undergone extensive environmental review, with improvements in the project proposal and design along the way. It will improve the environment, enhance a struggling fishery, improve water quality, create jobs, and provide a domestic source of the critical mineral antimony.

Under an ASAOC, Perpetua has already commenced environmental improvements at the site, addressing legacy contamination for which it has no responsibility. Today, steelhead and Chinook salmon cannot access spawning grounds because they are blocked by an abandoned mining pit. Perpetua will address this issue before mining even begins – reconnecting fish for the first time in more than 80 years. The company will build a fish passageway in the short term. Based on professional judgement and similar or longer tunnels, the SDEIS concludes Perpetua's tunnel would provide passage for all four special status fish species at site. And Perpetua's plan will eventually restore full access to 25 miles of perennial stream and 6 miles of fish spawning habitat above the Yellow Pine pit. If we do not allow Perpetua to move forward with their plans, it is highly unlikely anyone else will provide the funds needed to reconnect fish to this currently lost habitat. Issuing the permit will enhance this fishery immensely.

Today we rely on Russia and China to meet America's needs for antimony. This mineral is used in munitions, large-capacity storage batteries, fire retardants and more. Being dependent upon foreign countries to meet these critical U.S. needs is not good policy and could put our country in an untenable position of sacrificing strategic policy goals in order to maintain mineral supplies. We are exporting our wealth, our jobs, and our future, by maintaining reliance on foreign countries for critical minerals. This is why I am writing in support of the Stibnite Gold Project. This project can stop our import reliance on antimony.

I appreciate your time and thoughtfulness in the review process. The U.S. Forest Service has not cut any corners over the past 6 years analyzing the project and I've appreciated the opportunities to provide feedback. It's time to permit the Stibnite Gold Project. I urge you to issue the permit immediately following the close of the comment period. Thank you.

Carolyn McIntosh