

I believe that the United States (along with Canada and Australia) have the cleanest and most environmentally friendly mineral extraction industries in the world. To maximize protection of the world's environment mining should be encouraged in the US and in the clean environment jurisdictions and governments in other jurisdictions should be encouraged to enact regulations that protect the environment and the health and safety of their citizens, the mine workers and especially child labor in some third world mining operations.

Presently, the United States suffers from the reputation that it is the toughest jurisdiction in the world to get a permit to operate a mine or a mineral processing facility. Consequently, investment decisions are regularly being made to finance the exploration for, and development of, mineral deposits in jurisdictions where negative environmental factors are downplayed or ignored outright.

The NEPA process is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on understanding of environmental consequences, and take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment (40 CFR 1500.1(c)). The Act mandates that every Federal agency prepare a detailed statement of the effects of "major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment."

I submit that the "quality of the human environment" is negatively affected by the uncertainty and the long delays by United States agencies in the granting of permits to allow the development of mineral resources on federal lands in the United States. I note that there is presently a world-wide shortage of antimony trisulphide which has been used in primers for munitions. It is important that the United States maintains both the military capability to defend this country and the deterrent effect that a strong military has on maintaining world peace by discouraging the use of force by those who might otherwise choose war to advance their interests.

During World War II the Bradley companies were allowed to mine a major portion of the Stibnite Project, and the priorities at the time included speedy production of antimony and tungsten for the war effort. Protection of the environment was not as high a priority as it is today nor were concerns about the protection of fish habitat, nor the discharge of contaminated water. It has been seventy-seven (77) years since the end of World War II and sixty-nine (69) years since the end of the Korean War. A long time waiting for clean-up and improvements, but I note that even efforts by Perpetua to effect improvements in water quality were delayed until permits could be issued in the past few months.

Federal and State of Idaho regulators must ensure that Perpetua adheres to the laws and regulations regarding clean water, fish, and other environmental concerns in the granting of permits to proceed with their Stibnite Project. However, doing nothing is the least favorable option. Our national security will be advanced when production of critical minerals from this project commences. The quality of the human environment will be enhanced.

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