

As an employee of East Boulder Mine, and Geologist of many years, I can't simply summarize the positive impact the Stillwater and East Boulder Mines have had on the region over the last 38 years. The deposit by its very nature is one of the cleanest ore bodies in the world, with any PGM bearing sulfide targeted for recovery in the milling, and no heavy metal byproducts (lead, mercury, arsenic) associated with the ultramafic rocks to end up in the waste rock or tailings. The JM Reef is the highest grade deposit of PGMs in the world, metals critical to our continued emissions controls. It's important to recognize not only the sterling reputation Stillwater/East Boulder have for their environmental efforts, but also the importance their product has in keeping our air clean across the globe.

The East Boulder Amendment 004 to expand tailings and waste rock storage, details a plan that meets or exceeds all current standards. Stillwater Mining Company has many years of experience in designing, installing and maintaining tailings ponds without any major issues. The East Boulder mine should be commended on their transparency in communicating with the community on their plans. Openly discussing risks, no matter how low, of any potential tailings dam failure. Its unfortunate that a handful of people new to the community have decided to inflame fears around these low probability risks, in an effort to hurt or shut down the mine.

The efforts by outside organizations to sidetrack the tailings pond permitting with deep discussions around dry-stack tailings storage, a process that will not work with the fine silty East Boulders tailings. Even if dry stack tailings were a practical product, how would you keep them dry long term? Imagine the complications of installing a facility for dry tailings only to have the dry stacked silt become saturated with heavy rains in the springtime.

The discussion on Amendment 004 means nothing without considering the people affected. The third generation miners whose families have built homes, communities, and lifelong friendships. The businesses, schools, cities, and counties that have grown on the hard work of the employees, and local businesses dealing with the mine. As anyone knows, no mine lasts forever, but the East Boulder and Stillwater Mines have many years of life remaining, to help build our communities, provide high paying careers, in one of the most gorgeous parts of the world. To those wealthy new neighbors who say "not in my back yard", and international Environmental groups who have picked this as an opportunity to create a stir, I ask where else but here can we mine such a great PGM deposit safely, and environmentally.