

**Dear Mr. Grosvenor and Mr. Jones,**

I would like to thank the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Custer Gallatin National Forest (CGNF) and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for preparing the East Boulder Mine Amendment 004 Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

I am an employee of Sibanye-Stillwater residing in south-central Montana and the Agencies' decision on this permit would directly affect me. I respectfully request that the Agencies consider the following comments.

First and foremost, I support the Stillwater Mining Company's proposal for new tailings and waste rock storage facilities at the East Boulder Mine. The Stillwater Mining Company has proven over the past four decades that mining in Montana can be done sustainably and responsibly. Both platinum and palladium are on the United States Geological Survey's 2022 critical minerals list. As a global leader in Platinum Group Metal (PGM) production and recycling, as well as the only primary producer of PGMs in the United States, it is essential to our local communities, the State of Montana, and our country that the agencies approve SMC's application.

Through the Good Neighbor Agreement, Sibanye-Stillwater and the GNA Councils have collaborated for more than two decades to balance the need for positive rural economic development while minimizing impacts on the physical and human environments. Through this collaborative arrangement, they have developed standards that exceed state and federal standards. Please consider acknowledging that the use of these best current available technologies, including water treatment, air quality control measures, and traffic and housing limitations, have created benefits for our communities, while limited the impacts on our environment.

In addition to the GNA the East Boulder Mine has had an exemplary track record not only meeting but exceeding environmental regulations. I have been in the mining industry for 6 years working for Mom and Pop operations, a major gold mining company, and now Sibanye Stillwater. I am impressed and encouraged by this company's commitment to local communities and the environment. I would like to ask if you have any concerns about the way the East Boulder Mine has conducted itself concerning Environmental and Social Governances or its interactions with the local communities in Southern Montana? I have read some of the opposing opinions against Amendment 4 and I was struck by the "Not in my backyard" opinion of many. Having worked in the mining industry across the American West I can comfortably say that I am proud to have the East Boulder Mine in my backyard as an example to the world of what it looks like to mine responsibly. As well as working in the Boulder Valley I recreate here and want to continue to see a balanced portfolio of land use and be able to proudly look back and know that the valley can be home to trout, elk, wildflowers, and one of the world's foremost PGM mines.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the public process and appreciate your thorough analysis. If approved, continued operations at the East Boulder Mine is beneficial for our rural communities, Montana, and our country.

Thank you for your time reading my comment, Max

Respectfully,

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