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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Supervisor Jackson,

I am writing in support of Perpetua Resources Stibnite Gold Project. I have had the privilege of working alongside the Perpetua team as a consultant since 2013. Throughout this time, my support for the project and belief in this team has only grown stronger. Perpetua Resources has listened to stakeholder concerns and responded, established itself as a trustworthy, community partner and proven its commitment to restoring the site through early clean up actions. I urge the U.S. Forest Service to continue moving the Stibnite Gold Project forward by permitting the preferred alternative outlined in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Perpetua Resources is presenting us with an opportunity to restore an abandoned mining district, secure our nation's supply of antimony and provide hundreds of well-paying jobs for hardworking Idahoans.

When I first started working for the company, I wondered if the idea of restoring the site through modern mining was too good to be true. Today, I know it is possible. I've been to the site many times and it is clear the area needs help. I've seen the sediment filled waters in the spring from Blowout Creek, watched in awe as salmon try to make it back to their native spawning grounds only to be blocked by the Yellow Pine pit and stood on old tailings impacting ground and surface water because they were never properly stored. These conditions are not getting better on their own.

Perpetua Resources has intentionally designed its plans to prioritize environmental benefits early on in the project, so we do not need to wait for mining to be over to see positive changes. For example, before mining begins, the company will temporarily reconnect fish to upstream habitat using a passageway. Fish have been unable to access this habitat since the 1930s. In the SDEIS, the U.S. Forest Service indicated this decision will have a huge impact on fish in the region: The greatest benefit to Chinook salmon and steelhead passage comes in Mine Year -1 with the construction of the fishway, which would allow these species to volitionally access habitat that they have not naturally accessed for decades. (4.12.2;p.4-343). It is important to point out, Perpetua will permanently restore access for fish when they backfill the pit and reconstruct the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River.

Another major reason I support the Stibnite Gold Project is because of its ability to secure an American supply of antimony. This designated critical mineral is key to our national security and now poised to play an important role in the clean energy transition. Antimony is used in products ranging from fire retardants and grid storage batteries to essential products for our military like munitions and night vision goggles. It scares me to know America does not have a domestic supply of antimony and that more than 90% of the world's supply is controlled by China, Russia and Tajikistan. Antimony is far too important to rely on other countries to provide it to us. We must secure our own supply and the Stibnite Gold Project is currently the only option.

Perpetua Resources also stands to help hundreds of Idaho families by providing well-paying jobs. On page 4-524 in the SDEIS it says: The 2021 MMP would make a significant contribution to the Valley County economy in terms of direct and indirect employment and wages during the life of the SGP. In addition, the 2021 MMP would generate significant tax revenues for various levels of government. The economic benefits associated with increased employment opportunities and tax revenues could lead to continued or improved access to health services, better nutrition, and better overall well-being for the local community.

While bringing in well-paying jobs has many benefits, Perpetua Resources has always known it will have an impact on local communities. Instead of taking a wait and see approach, Perpetua Resources has proactively

engaged with local communities to start discussing how it can help address some of these changes. At the end of 2018, the company founded the Stibnite Advisory Council and it has been holding monthly meetings with eight of the closest communities to the project ever since. This level of collaboration demonstrates Perpetua's commitment to help its neighbors and do what is right.

If we cannot permit this project - a project that will benefit the environment, support our national security and provide family-wage jobs - I worry there will never be another mine to move forward in the United States. We depend on minerals for almost every aspect of our lives and I am no longer comfortable pushing mining overseas, where we have absolutely no control over the labor conditions, environmental standards or our own supply chains. I would much rather permit well-thought-out, environmentally sound projects in America. This way, we can make sure mining is done right.

I appreciate all the work the U.S. Forest Service has done to review the Stibnite Gold Project and I am grateful for the opportunity to share my perspective. Given the many benefits of the project and our nation's need for the minerals it would provide, I encourage the U.S. Forest Service to approve construction of the mine as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Natalie Podgorski