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First name: Scott

Last name: Hartman

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing in support of Hecla Greens Creek Mining Company's (HGCMC) request to expand their Tailings Disposal Facility (TDF) and related infrastructure as described in their North Extension Project (NEP). I favor Alternative D and believe it is time for a long-term tailings expansion plan likely to accommodate the eventual mine life. This will allow long-term planning and optimization of: design, engineering, construction, operation, reclamation, water treatment and monitoring; and reduce wasteful multiple relocations of infrastructure characteristic of smaller expansion approvals.

Alternative D provides for an expansion of the existing TDF that builds on the existing successful facility, minimizes new monument disturbance outside the existing lease boundary, and avoids direct disturbance to sensitive habitats and environmental resources. Alternative D satisfies the Purpose and Need with the lowest surface impact per storage volume. The use of eastern topography to buttress and allow stacking to greater heights reduces the catchment area of contact water per volume of storage, reducing pond requirements and associated disturbance. It also reduces the area of the oxidized near-surface zone on the east side. Alternative D will be built in stages to optimize disturbance to eventual mine life and allow time to mitigate the increased fugitive dust concerns at higher elevation per AQ-1 mitigation requirements.

The DEIS has identified and addressed significant issues with extensive monitoring and mitigation requirements, e.g. section 2.6. Mines such as HGCMC must pass through one of the most stringent and involved permitting processes anywhere in the world and they have met this challenge. Their daily operations are governed by dozens of stringent permits, and they devote significant resources to prevent impacts to their surrounding environment. HGCMC is an important part of securing the supply chain for important materials that sustain our economy past, present, and future rather than importing from jurisdictions that do not share our environmental or social justice values.

HGCMC has demonstrated its commitment to environmental excellence for the past 35 years. It also is a significant contributor to Juneau's economy and a generous community supporter. For these reasons, I support HGCMC's tailings expansion, Alternative D.