

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/5/2023 10:37:42 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: 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 Stillwater Mining Company residing in south-central Montana and directly affected by the Amendment 4 decision. 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.

Loss of about \$7,940,550 in Class 2 property taxes and metal mine license taxes in Sweet Grass County when operations cease in five years, representing about 56 percent of county revenues. This is a significant adverse impact and should be disclosed as such. The Stillwater Mining Company is the lifeblood of our communities in south-central Montana. The company provides excellent paying jobs for nearly 2,000 residents across multiple counties. If Amendment 004 is not approved, operations at the East Boulder Mine could not continue beyond 2025. The Stillwater Mining Company has proven PGM ore reserves until 2062. If the East Boulder Mine discontinued operations, close to four decades of socioeconomic benefits and growth opportunities would be lost. As identified in the Draft EIS, PGMs are identified as a Critical Mineral by the United States Geological Survey. The Draft EIS should analyze the socioeconomic indirect effects to national security and the vulnerabilities of supply-chain disruptions under the No Action Alternative.

This permit is essential for Sibanye Stillwater to continue to operate. Sibanye Stillwater not only employs people from the direct area but all over the state as well as surrounding states. If this permit fails, and mining comes to a stop not only does it leave these people out of job but the loss of revenue to the state. How does the opposition propose to fill that loss of revenue for these county's, state and employees effected? Sibanye also takes every precaution and above industry standards when designing/constructing all aspects of tailing impoundment and waste rock impoundment. With all time, effort and research put into this design and being a state of the art facility how does the opposition purpose a better design? Sibanye Stillwater is the only PGM mine in the United States. Also the Montana operations has the highest grade PGM in the world. PGM is also a critical mineral. Once again to continue to operate, this permit is needed. Where do those opposed suggest these critical minerals come from in the event the Montana operation closing? What alternative to the PGM do they suggest?

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.

Respectfully,

Pete Reisenauer