

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/8/2023 8:24:36 PM

First name: Chandler

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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 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.

The analysis area identified in the Draft EIS only discloses impacts in Sweet Grass County. Due to the significant socioeconomic contributions of Sibanye-Stillwater in Montana, the Draft EIS should analyze and disclose the direct impacts to the neighboring counties, as well. How much tax revenue will be lost in Park, Stillwater, and Yellowstone Counties under the No Action Alternative?

What is the loss of tax revenue to the State of Montana, and how does the indirectly impact all Montanans? According to a University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research study, the company's operations annually contribute over \$6 billion to Montana's economic output, including over \$260 million in payroll taxes, over \$60 million in direct employee taxes, over \$500 million in additional household income, and create over 6,000 additional total jobs in Montana.

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.

I support the conclusion of the CGNF subject matter experts and DEQ in their conclusion that the "studies conducted to date have not established the feasibility of producing a geotechnically stable filtered tailings product that can be transported and placed in a FTSF that will remain free-standing and stable, and would result in a reduction in environmental risk." Sibanye-Stillwater and the GNA have partnered to research alternative tailings storage technologies, including filtered tailings/dry stacking, for more than twenty years. The extensive research supports the agencies' conclusion that this alternative is simply not technically feasible at this point in time.

As an employee at Stillwater I would say that the extension of the mine is crucial to the state of Montana. Stillwater jobs provides an awesome opportunities for the employees here. Stillwater has one of the best health insurance in the state. The wages are very good compared to many other jobs throughout the state. As a single father my job at Stillwater has given me the opportunity to provide for my family in a way that many other job is the state of Montana does not provide. With the way the work schedule is I get more time at home than most job in the state. I am happy and honored to be an employee at Stillwater and I look forward to working here for

another 20-30 years.

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,

Chandler Crowe