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First name: GROVER

Last name: WALLACE

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Mr. Grosvenor and Mr. Jones,

I would like to thank the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, the 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.

We live and are retired here in south-central Montana and both my wife and my livelihood as well as my community depends on Sibanye-Stillwater's continued operations. I respectfully request that the Agencies consider the following comments.

First and foremost, as Big Timber residents, we support Sibanye-Stillwater's proposal for tailings and waste rock storage facilities at the East Boulder Mine. Sibanye-Stillwater 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.

My wife and I have lived here in Big Timber for the past 7 years and our plan is to continue our retirement here in Big Timber. Sibanye-Stillwater is the lifeblood of our communities and thousands of families who reside here in south-central Montana. The company provides excellent paying jobs and benefits for nearly 2,000 employees across multiple counties and ultimately contributes over \$6 billion in economic output to Montana. If Amendment 004 is not approved, operations at the East Boulder Mine could not continue beyond 2025. I understand that Sibanye-Stillwater's property taxes and metal mines license taxes represent over half of Sweet Grass County's revenue. I also understand that Sweet Grass County would lose nearly \$8 million if operations were to cease in five years. If this were to happen, this would have a significant adverse impact on this community, surrounding communities, the State of Montana and most importantly the thousands of Montana families who reside in and around the communities.

My wife and I enjoy the outdoors and we love to camp and fish up the Boulder River and its accessible tributaries. 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, I fully believe and trust that 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 truly appreciate the opportunity to participate in the public process and appreciate your thorough analysis. If approved, continued operations at the East Boulder Mine will have positive and beneficial long-term impacts for thousands of families, our rural communities, The State of Montana, and the United States. Thank you for your time in reading this.

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