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First name: Ashley

Last name: Chancellor

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Mr. Grosvenor and Mr. Jones,

I write in support of the East Boulder Major Amendment 004 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the proposed addition of the Dry Fork Waste Rock Storage Facility and Lewis Gulch Tailings Storage Facility.

The current EIS did an extensive job of characterizing environmental and social impacts associated with the proposal, allowing the responsible persons to make an informed decision on approving the amendment. However, I respectfully request that the Agencies consider the following comments:

Sibanye-Stillwater's position as the only primary producer of critical minerals platinum and palladium (PGM's), as well as one of the largest global recyclers of platinum, palladium, and rhodium is vital to our national security and supply chain independence. As identified in the Draft EIS, the Department of Interior's United States Geological Survey has identified PGMs as "critical minerals." The Draft EIS should analyze the socioeconomic indirect effects to national security and the vulnerabilities of supply-chain disruptions under the No Action Alternative. What will be the socio-economic impact of this disruption?

The analysis area identified in the Draft EIS only discloses impacts in Sweet Grass County where the mine is physically located. Due to the significant socioeconomic contributions of Sibanye-Stillwater in Montana, the Draft EIS should analyze and disclose the direct impacts to the neighboring communities, as well. How much tax revenue will be lost in the neighboring counties of Park, Stillwater, and Yellowstone Counties under the No Action Alternative? How does this loss of tax revenue from a potential closure of the East Boulder Mine indirectly impact all Montanans?

The Sibanye-Stillwater East Boulder Operation has a demonstrated record spanning more than two decades of collaboration with both regulatory and non-profit entities to balance the need for positive rural economic development while minimizing impacts on the physical and human environments. Through collaboration arrangement, they have developed standards that exceed state and federal standards. The use of best available technologies in areas such as water treatment, traffic and traffic and housing limitations, have created substantial benefits for our communities, while limited the impacts on our environment.

As a society, it is vital to have mining operations in jurisdictions that are well regulated and responsibly managed. This ensures that our critical minerals are sourced sustainably, in a way my companies that provide a high-quality standard of living to their employees and in the communities in which they reside. In conclusion, I believe that the East Boulder Mine provides a strong example of how mining can and should be done responsibly and sustainably in the United States. I therefore urge you to approve the proposed action.

Thank you for your efforts in this process and consideration of my questions and comments.