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First name: Tom

Last name: Kircher

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.

I am an employee of Sibanye-Stillwater for over 35 years. I reside in south-central Montana, and I fully support the proposal for tailings and waste rock storage expansion at the East Boulder Mine. The Agencies' decision on this permit would directly affect me and my family as it would many families not only in the area but around the state. Sibanye Stillwater has proven to be a leader in the mining industry in Montana and a model not only for other mines, but industry as a whole. The economic impact of the mines not continuing would be devastating to our communities. Although the draft EIS only reviewed the economic impact for Sweet Grass County, the impact would be greater than just that in sweet grass county. This may be something that should be analyzed also. Under the No Action Alternative, what is the loss of tax revenue to the State of Montana, and how does this indirectly impact all Montanans?

With 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.

Stillwater has shown that sustainable mining the environment and community can coexist and make the country a better place. Sibanye-Stillwater has proven over the past four decades that mining in Montana can be done responsibly and maintain a healthy environment.

In my time at Stillwater I have seen a lot of transition and change mostly for the better and I expect that to continue as we improve our systems and as new technologies be come feasible. It has been my observation that the reason Stillwater has been a leader and model in the industry is the commitment to the statement "we do it because it's the right thing to do". I see that commitment is stronger than it ever has been. When it comes to public safety and protecting the environment has the highest of standards.

I 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 beneficial long-term impacts for our rural communities, Montana, and the United States.

I respectfully request that the Agencies consider my comments.

Thank you.

Tom Kircher

tkircher58@gmail.com

120 A East Church Street

Absarokee MT. 59001