

August 13, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke  
U.S. Secretary of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary,

On behalf of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, the fastest growing organization representing sportsmen and women in North America, we write to express strong support for a mineral withdrawal in the Methow Headwaters.

The upper Methow Valley in the North Cascades is a unique landscape of national significance that needs to be conserved in the face of a proposal from a Canadian mining company to open an industrial scale gold and copper mine here. The unique watershed and ecosystem is home to high-quality fish and wildlife habitat, supporting robust populations of cutthroat trout and mule deer. The site of the proposed mine would fragment an important migration corridor and interfere with the seasonal movement of Washington's largest mule deer population, which migrate from the high country of the Pasayten Wilderness to wintering range in the lower valley. Hunters from across the Pacific Northwest travel to the area each fall to pursue these deer, providing a significant economic boost to local communities. The recovery of Upper Columbia Chinook salmon and the health of coldwater fisheries supporting highly sought-after species such as anadromous steelhead also rely on the clean, connected waters of the upper Methow River and its tributaries for spawning habitat and thermal refuge.

The Methow also boasts a vibrant community with strong agriculture and tourism sectors, drawing visitors from around the region and sending Washington apples around the world. The proposed mine's impact to Washington's economy is another negative factor to consider. More than 70 percent of the local economy depends on the clean water of the Methow River for outdoor recreation activities, which generates \$150 million annually in consumer spending. This revenue helps fuel our nation's \$887-billion outdoor economy that employs 7.6 million Americans. . Nearly 200,000 jobs are supported in Washington state as a result of outdoor recreation spending, with total economic contributions to the state economy amounting to \$20.5 billion annually. The hunting and fishing industry alone employs close to 500,000 Americans — this is 300,000 more jobs available compared to the energy development industry

If this copper and gold mining proposal is allowed to move forward, fish and wildlife habitat stands to lose greatly and access to quality public lands and waters would diminish greatly for America's sportsmen and women in addition to threatening the vibrant local economy that relies on outdoor recreation like hunting and fishing. We encourage you to support and advance a mineral withdrawal in the Methow Headwaters to conserve a critical landscape that is vital to Washington's rural economies. North America's wild public lands, waters, and wildlife depend on it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Land Tawney  
President and CEO  
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Bart George  
Co-Chairman  
Washington State Chapter  
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Max Cole  
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Chase Gunnell  
Conservation Committee Chairman  
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Carmen Vanbianchi  
Methow Resident and Member  
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cc: Jamie Connell, BLM Oregon-Washington State Director