

Dear Governor Bullock:

I write today as an angler with a grave concern regarding the proposed mine in the headwaters of the Smith River.

As you know, a foreign mining company, Tintina Resources, has filed an application with the State of Montana to construct a large copper mine in the watershed of one of our state's crown fly fishing destinations. Although the proposed mine would be constructed on private land, its location directly beneath Sheep Creek is problematic. Sheep Creek is a major tributary, producing half of the Smith's flows and is crucial habitat for more than 50 percent of the Smith's spawning trout.

No matter how you slice it, an industrial mine in the headwaters of the Smith River is a gamble for Montana's sport fishing industry, which generates an estimated \$500 million in economic activity each year. If anything were to go wrong, fishing guides, outfitters, and fishermen would be on the front lines of the disaster. This concern is further magnified because of who is in the driver's seat.

Last September, Australian mining company, Sandfire Resources, invested heavily in the project with an option to purchase a controlling share of Tintina. In a recent interview, Sandfire's CEO was quoted saying his company wants "a clear path to control, otherwise we are not interested. Essentially unless we can pull levers and push buttons we have very little interest in being involved in something."

Decisions by foreign investors who live over 8,000 miles away could have profound impacts on local Montanans who use the Smith River year in and year out.

Before any permit is granted and any construction take place, Tintina Resources and their investors should be held to a zero risk standard by the Department of Environmental Quality. They should be forced to meet the highest expectations of environmental protection ever put forward in the state of Montana.

I recognize in advance this could be a tough bar to meet. The track record of hard rock mines in Montana isn't glowing. Mines like Kendall Mine near Lewistown, Beal Mountain Mine near Anaconda, and the Zortman-Landusky mines near Malta have shown that the pollution of our watersheds is an all too common occurrence. Further, Tintina has yet to provide any evidence - let alone 100% sound scientific evidence - that the mine will not produce short term or long term environmental impacts, or that when the mine closes, there will be no lasting pollution.

It is essential then that the Department of Environmental Quality establish a zero risk threshold and closely scrutinize every detail of the upcoming mine proposal for its effects on water, wildlife, fish and the sustainable recreational economy the Smith river supports.

The question is not whether mining has a place in Montana. The question is whether Tintina resources and their investors can prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that a mine in the Smith River watershed is really worth the gamble.

Thank you for your consideration, and for making the valued outdoor treasures of Montana a priority.

Most Sincerely,