

March 17, 2017

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
1200 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

Sent Via Email

Attention: The Honorable Scott Pruitt, EPA Administrator

Subject: Special Consideration & Expedited Review for Strategic Resource Projects Critical to the Nation's Economy, Infrastructure, and Resource Independence.

Dear Mr. Pruitt,

As you are already well informed, this letter is to re-inform you, yet again, about the over encumbrance the EPA has had in recent years to stifle, choke, outlast and waste efforts to block some of the nation's most important projects from becoming a reality. The EPA, among other agencies, has near frozen in place the responsible development of natural resources and critical infrastructure projects in this country. As a result, billions of dollars are spent on studies, reviews, more studies, more reviews, unreasonable and unfathomable requirements put on the shoulders of businesses and the professionals that bring the way of life we all enjoy to a reality. The burdens have become too great and the waste created by the EPA has ruined what good the agency has done for the environment and its own original mandates in the past. The development of natural resources and these projects allow our country and its people to enjoy modern advancements that provide better quality of life. For the EPA, its not about the environment anymore, it is about causing havoc on those that want to make core improvements to the nations interests and blocking the best, most talented, and responsible businesses from bringing the most environmentally sensitive projects to life.

Any project, with the right professionals, the right resources, and the right plan can be built, no matter how big the environmental challenges and risks are. In fact, these professionals can bring more benefit to the environment through enhancement efforts than the ill perceived damages thought by some. These perceptions do not consider all factors and are a negative view on human ingenuity, expertise, and creativity. Capital and expertise is the basis for developing our nation's projects and resources without harm to the environment. The United States, along with a few other nations, have the best talent and businesses that can bring these difficult projects to reality, resulting in long term generational benefits economically, environmentally, and for the future advancement of humanity.

The recent efforts by you and the new administration to start bringing these well planned projects to reality are to be commended. Thank you for your efforts thus far. Much work is ahead of you and the new administration. As you can think of many projects that are in this situation today, we want to bring two specific cases back to your attention: The Pebble project in southern Alaska and the Coles Hill project in southern Virginia. We are sure you are well aware of these projects and their history, so we will get to the point:

We recommend that the EPA expedite their review of the applicable permits required by law and allow these projects to return to normal course permitting and planning stages. We also recommend the EPA work with other regulatory agencies to exchange information and recommendations to further expedite other regulatory hurdles. We recommend the EPA reconsider its mission and purpose as an agency to the fullest extent. We recommend the EPA become a partner in advancing these and all critical projects.

The Pebble Project

As you know, the Pebble project can only be described as a monster resource project that is so large it should be of strategic interest to the United States. The project is a game changer for the State of Alaska. For the United States, it will move the GDP growth needle for decades to come. Recent studies alone have demonstrated the project, if built, will provide well over 10,000 direct jobs for decades and add near \$2.5 billion to annual GDP of the United States, once again, for decades. The benefits do not stop at that.

With resource reserves near impossible to imagine, the Pebble project has some of the largest known reserves globally, making it one of the top world class assets that is yet to be developed and is the largest in North America. The reserves of copper, molybdenum, gold, silver, and other metals are so large, the project is clearly a strategic asset of the United States. People seem to forget what it takes from the ground to make sure they have things like electricity, cars, appliances, infrastructure, smart phones and other modern conveniences. The EPA's over-reaching and perverse policies have helped these people forget where these conveniences come from...out of the earth itself.

The Pebble project is a generational project spanning a significant duration and will provide major regional advancement to Alaska, improve living standards, infrastructure, and provide critical resources needed by the United States and its people. Yet, this can all be achieved with little or no impact to the environment when built by the right professionals with the right plan. The Pebble project has already done some of the most significant and extensive environmental studies in history. About \$120 million and 8 years of environmental studies have brought nothing from the EPA except for headaches and significant capital destruction.

The EPA is not an environmental expert, but they take credit for claiming to be one. In fact, the real experts on environmental mitigation, safety, risk, and enhancement are the major mining companies and their subcontractor consultants that have spent decades and countless hours dealing specifically with the development of mines and ensuring environmental protection. These firms have the best geologists, biologists, hydrologists and other experts, not the EPA. These are firms like BHP Billiton, Freeport McMoRan, Barrick, Newmont, Goldcorp, Rio Tinto, Teck Resources, and many other successful mining businesses who know more about mining and environmental protections than any government agency will ever know. The EPA should be a partner, not a hindrance, when dealing with good businesses and good projects. We have reviewed the multi-thousand page environmental studies on the Pebble project and there is not one good reason why this project cannot be built according to the best environmental practices known by the best mining companies and top environmental consultants. We are certain that the proposed methods for environmental protections will have little or no negative impact but could in fact enhance the long term environment sustainability.

The decisions that need to be made expeditiously by the EPA, Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Energy and other agencies are clear. The best businesses in the industry are ready to develop one of the best projects responsibly and with high regard for protecting the environment. Again, be a partner to encourage the achievement of the common goal.

The Coles Hill Project

As you know, Coles Hill has a large reserve of a true strategic resource of energy and defense interest to the United States: Uranium. While Pebble is so large it should be considered strategic, Coles Hill is just plain and simple strategic to U.S. interests according to U.S. law. Coles Hill has in excess of 150 million pounds of uranium resource yet the State of Virginia consistently refuses to allow the mining of uranium within the state. Coles Hill asserts that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has overriding authority when it comes to nuclear energy and defense interests. Therefore, the State of Virginia needs to endorse the process set forth and allow a normal permitting procedure and subsequent planning & development to take normal course. Nuclear energy is a national interest and is a critical part of the nation's solution for reliable clean energy that provides the core base load power for an advanced economy.

Today, there is no replacement for nuclear energy and its fuel, uranium; it stands in a class of its own.

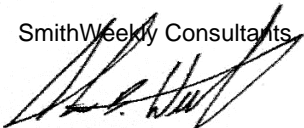
The responsible mining of uranium while protecting and enhancing the environment is a necessity. Uranium mining technology, safety, and methods have improved significantly over the years. There is no doubt that the environment can be protected while extracting this critical energy resource from the earth. The EPA, along with the Department of Energy, should ensure that it looks out for the interests of the United States and its energy infrastructure regardless of a hang-up caused by a state who doesn't quite understand the importance of this large resource of uranium that provides jobs, economic growth, energy independence, and a generational sustaining investment into advancing our country's future. Again, the EPA and the Energy Department should be a partner to encourage the achievement of the common goal. Aside from the nation, Virginia would be a beneficiary to the Coles Hill project. The decisions that need to be made here are, yet again, clear.

We expect, a sound nation expects, as well as all the businesses that interact with the environment expect, that the EPA revert back to being an agency that considers all impacts that they as an agency make on economics, jobs, strategic interests, and how they indirectly affect the environment in a negative way. We can't protect the environment without projects, economic sense, and capital investments that improve methods. The agency needs to take a moment and reassess what it is doing and how it can protect the environment of reason, humanity, earth, and the resources earth provides for the sustainable survival and advancement of all.

Mr. Pruitt, please let us know if you have and questions. We look forward to speaking with you. We appreciate your consideration of our commentary and recommendations. We appreciate your time. We wish you and your family success in your new position. We look forward to real progress.

Sincerely,

SmithWeekly Consultants, Inc.



Andrew Weekly
President

Cc: Via Email: U.S. Department of Energy, Secretary Rick Perry

Ref: Pebble: Case No. 3:14-cv-0171-HRH, in the U.S. District Court for Alaska, Region 10, EPA case files, pebblepartnership.com, and various studies. Coles Hill: Case no. 16-1005, in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and Virginia uranium mining acts.

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