

March 3, 2017

Chief Thomas Tidwell
U.S. Forest Service
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-1111

Re: Support for the Methow Headwaters mineral withdrawal

Dear Chief Tidwell:

I am writing to express my support for the proposed mineral withdrawal of lands in the Methow Headwaters. The Methow Valley is an important and vital contributor to the economy of Okanogan County. Its waters are critical to farming, ranching, recreation as well as being tied directly to the aquifer that supplies most all residents. Its lands are home to important, diverse wildlife populations and provide recreational and scenic qualities that attract visitors and second homeowners to the valley, as well as support the livelihoods of a large number of full-time residents.

Development of a large-scale mine in the proposed location creates many logistical problems that cannot be easily remedied as well as being antithetical to the current economic model in the Methow Valley. Further, opposition to large-scale mining has unified the community. Concern over a potential industrial mine in the Methow Headwaters has continued to grow and today opposition includes more than 150 diverse businesses, community leaders and organizations, and several thousand concerned citizens.

I feel that the withdrawing the land in the Methow Headwaters from mineral entry for the above reasons is important and urgent. It is my feeling that the BLM and the Forest Service should approve the proposed 20 year mineral withdrawal "in aide of legislation." In writing this letter I am supporting the desires of our community, the continued growth of the regional economy, and the protection of precious water supplies that are the region's most important resource.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Hover', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Andy Hover
Okanogan County Commissioner, District 2

Cc: Representative Dan Newhouse, US House of Representatives
Senator Patty Murray, US Senate
Senator Maria Cantwell, US Senate