

OPINION in Star News, "Perpetua's Greenwashing"

by Judy Anderson

I must respond to Perpetua's new chapter in the mining industry's roll out of what I call the The Strategic Minerals Redemption Story. Perpetua's new chapter, covered extensively in the press and PR, portrays an energy intensive industrial cyanide leach gold mine on public land as a "green savior"- not only delivering us from the pollution left by previous mines but from climate change itself via their side action: antimony and possible green energy battery storage. That is quite a chunk to swallow.

But it is not an unusual claim as the mining industry reinvents itself to exploit the confusion around the desperate need to cut back on carbon emissions. They are leaping on the "strategic minerals" bandwagon lobbying extensively and reconfiguring their mines to claim that they MUST mine, be unhampered by regulations and get government subsidies to provide all of us with the minerals we need to keep living the life we have been living.

There is never a questioning about how the life we have been living (including the mining) has been the cause of all this destruction, climate chaos and suffering- and that by continuing it unabated we are indeed signing our own death warrant.

Perhaps the investors believe they will not suffer from climate change so they are comfortable with their PR machines churning out stories about why they should be able to continue in the same vein (just a little greener), never acknowledging the deep exploitation of the natural world and peoples that is the basis for their wealth and the ultimate cause of climate change. Nor will they ever admit the many backroom shenanigans where they push to compromise or eliminate the protections for the public health and wildlife, for air quality and water quality.

Perpetua, for example, never reveals getting the Idaho Rules on Cyanidation rewritten so they are now more favorable to the mining industry. Or how they forced the Forest Service to allow them to write their own Biological Assessment of the effects of their mine on endangered salmon. Or how they pressured the Idaho Legislature to pass HB 141 which gutted the Idaho regulations for the bonding of gold mines.

Perpetua doesn't talk about the fact that they will be using outrageous amounts of energy and water and despoiling millions of tons of earth, polluting air and water, to basically mine gold. And they don't talk about how they have been required to do a new Environmental Impact Statement because the last one had so many gaps in information and sloppy analyses of impacts.

No, I don't think we can accept this fuzzy green blanket pulled over the destruction of lands and water. Because when you look under the blanket you can see it is an opportunistic attempt to capitalize on climate change without really addressing the underlying cause. Climate change, which is the worst crisis the world has ever seen, demands that we question the economic system, our models of development and the cultural values that have brought us to this impasse. "Replacing a rapacious fossil fuel industry with an equally predatory renewables industry" will not solve our climate crisis, will not stop the depletion of resources and our water, and will not further global justice.

We cannot mine our way out of these crises. We cannot consume our way out. We can reduce our consumption so there is less demand for raw materials and mining. We can develop skills to

conserve water and energy. We can together fight to honor, share and protect the land, soil, water and air that we depend on.

And if the mining industry and Perpetua wishes to have any credibility in furthering a just transition to a world that operates under the earth's limitations, they must:

Support the reformation of the 1872 mining law which was written for pick and shovel operations not the industrial mining of today. Support tough protections for the real crucial needs - air, water, ecosystems, human rights and health. Develop closed loop production models that champion conservation, decarbonization, reuse, recycling, and recovery of metals and minerals. Adopt an industry wide certification program, controlled by a reputable third party, so consumers can know exactly what they are buying, where it came from and what the commitments were to environmental and social justice. Push for fair royalty payments for mining billions of dollars of public resources. If they did this, instead of greenwashing, I would listen.

– Judy Anderson