

**From:** John Russ  
**To:** [FS-comments-intermtn-payette](#)  
**Cc:** [Jim Thackeray](#)  
**Subject:** Midas Gold  
**Date:** Sunday, July 16, 2017 12:15:33 PM

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Payette National Forest  
ATTN: Forest Supervisor, Keith Lannom – Stibnite Gold EIS  
500 N. Mission St.  
McCall, ID 83638

Dear Mr. Lannom:

I am aware that Midas Gold is currently in the permitting process in pursuit of authorization to advance into long-term mining production activities at Stibnite, Idaho, and vicinity.

On behalf of the Idaho Department of Labor, I wish to express our support for Midas Gold and their mining endeavors in Valley County, Idaho. We encourage that Midas Gold be permitted to operate according to their plans. We base our support on several factors:

- Valley County historically experiences one of the highest unemployment rates in Idaho on a seasonal basis. High unemployment typically occurs during the Winter and Spring months as workers are laid off from construction projects, recreation & tourism, landscaping, service industry jobs, public land management/administration (U S Forest Service, Idaho Department of Lands, Idaho State Parks, etc.), and more. The prospect of approximately 500 new jobs in Valley County that will be steady and not subject to seasonal layoffs, is very attractive when considering the health of Valley County's economy. It is my understanding that operations will run 365 days per year, 24 hours per day.
- Midas Gold will provide a unique diversity in employment and industry in Valley County, which we should expect to strengthen the economy and the employment base of the area. While there may be a small mining operation or two in Idaho's West Central Mountain vicinity, they are of little consequence in the overall economic and employment impact. The Midas Gold operation will be substantial and its effects will be far-reaching. The mining industry is virtually non-existent in Valley County at this time (aside from Midas Gold's exploration activities within the last five years), so their development to a full operation mode will establish another major industry in Valley County. While some occupations (ie: general laborer, truck driver, mechanic, general office clerk, etc) exist in other industries, as well, the mining industry also employs positions unique to that industry.
- Pay and benefits offered by Midas Gold are anticipated to be well above average for Valley County. The company projects an average of \$70,000 to \$80,000 per year for those working in operations. Compare that to the average annual wage of \$35,130 for workers in Valley County and to the average annual wage of \$39,650 for workers statewide in Idaho (according to the Idaho Department of Labor's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages).

- We understand that housing will be provided free of charge for the approximately 400 to 425 employees working at the mine site, along with food and recreation. Housing is an on-going and growing concern for workers (and, consequently, for employers) in all sectors in Valley County. By providing housing for 80% (or more) of their workforce, Midas Gold's "negative impact" on our current housing situation will be minimal.
- Midas Gold's expressed commitment to environmental concerns is commendable, including reclamation of the site to conditions preceding the operations by prior mine operators. And, while seemingly commendable in all aspects, it is also necessary that the mine be operated with a serious commitment to our environment in Valley County (and in downstream and downwind locations beyond Valley County) considering the potential negative general economic impact should environmental harm occur. Based on Midas Gold's stated commitment to environmental concerns, as well as how they have operated during the exploration phase, we believe that Midas Gold can and will operate in an environmentally-safe manner.

Thank you for your consideration. Feel free to contact me should you have questions.

Sincerely,

John M. Russ

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