



City of Soda Springs

9 West Second South
Soda Springs, ID 83276

Mitchell J. Hart, Council President

October 20, 2020

Ms. Linda Jackson
Forest Supervisor
Payette National Forest
500 North Mission Street, Building 2
McCall, Idaho 83638-3805

Subject: Letter of Support – *Public Safety*
Midas Gold Stibnite Gold Project

I have reviewed Midas Gold Idaho's Stibnite Gold Project (SGP) Plan of Restoration and Operations (PRO or plan) and met with members of Midas Gold Idaho's technical team to better understand the company's plans for the Project. Below are supporting comments on the value mining operations are to the broader community and to be included in the public comment period ending October 28, 2020.

My family and I have lived in the City of Soda Springs, Caribou County, Idaho for 34 years. I have served as a public official of the City for 25 of those years. I have worked in the mining and mineral processing industries of southeastern Idaho for the entirety of our time in the area. I have witnessed firsthand the benefits of public – private partnerships with respect to public safety. The presence of local mining and industrial operations enhances the effectiveness of local Emergency Management Services (EMS) and does not put a strain on local emergency responders. Allow me to explain.

Exploration and mining of phosphate rich ore deposits of southeastern Idaho began in the early 1900s. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, large phosphate fertilizer and elemental phosphorus facilities were planned and constructed. For almost 70 years, the phosphate industry has worked in partnership with local communities in support of public health and safety.

Currently, three companies commercially mine and process phosphate in southeastern Idaho, namely: Bayer (formerly Monsanto), Itafos Conda, LLC (formerly Agrium) and J.R. Simplot Company. Three other companies – FMC, Nutrien (formerly Agrium) and Solvay are involved in varying degrees addressing legacy mine closures.

An integral part of each of these company's policies is health and safety. Formal Health and Safety Plans (HASPs) are developed and implemented. Contained in each HASP are the following components:

- Emergency Contacts – emergency contact information is established to allow company health and safety professionals to work in close coordination with local community-based EMS its personnel and leadership. This includes -- local hospitals, County-based EMS (ambulance, EMT and paramedics), Air Rescue, Sheriff Departments, Search and Rescue, Fire Departments, Poison Control (including insect bites) and National Response Center (spill reporting and response).
- Dispatch Services – in many cases, the mining companies establish their own dispatch service to manage their personnel and to work in partnership with local EMS dispatch, as needed.
- Muster Points and Helicopter Landing Zones – designated muster points and helicopter landing zones are established at each mine and facility location. Not only does this facilitate emergency response at the mines but provides broader support in those instances the local EMS (such as: search and rescue) need support from the mine and industrial facilities.
- Incident Response and Notification Procedures – incident response and notification procedures are established for incidents like -- injury/medical, environmental spill, property damage and fire. Long distance radio communication systems are established and connected to dispatch service to provide two-way communication between mine and industrial operations and local EMS. This benefit and supports both parties as emergencies may arise to work in concert in addressing emergency situations.
- Emergency Supplies and Equipment – emergency supplies and equipment are purchased and maintained in first aid kits, operations, and support vehicles and in shop and office facilities and often shared and coordinated with Local EMS.
- Emergency Response Personnel – each mine and industrial plant facility establishes and trains their own first aid and emergency management personnel. This training provides support at their operations and extends their training and experience to the communities in which they reside.

It has been my experience that the above-mentioned procedures, practices, and protocols established by local and regional mining and industrial operations complement and enhance local EMS rather than put any drain on public resources. Private industry and government entities work closely to standardize equipment and procedures. Industry has been very generous in donating surplus equipment, help finance needed upgrades of facilities and provide other resources to local police, fire, and emergency services.

Example: Just the other day on October 17, 2020; Midas Gold personnel based at Stibnite assisted area search and rescue teams in rescuing a hunter that was lost. Midas Gold personnel gathered up safety and medical gear and jumped in to help rescue teams. Midas Gold setup their on-site communication systems in coordination with Search and Rescue which proved critical in bring in air rescue support to the rescue. This is a prime example of how mining can and will be a support local EMS.

Without question, the approval and establishment of the Midas Gold Stibnite Gold Project will only add value to the local and regional communities.

As the U.S. Forest Service and other state and federal agencies review the proposed plan and determine the course of action, I encourage you to consider and appropriately weigh the positive benefits Midas Gold will have on the local communities and their respective public health and safety. The Stibnite Gold Project will be a win-win for Valley County and its neighboring communities.

Best Regards,

Mitchell J. Hart
 Council President
 City of Soda Springs (Idaho)