

U.S. Forest Service, Payette National Forest
Attn: Linda Jackson, Payette Forest Supervisor
500 North Mission Street
McCall, ID 83638

Linda Jackson,

As an employee of Midas Gold, I am quite familiar with and supportive of the Stibnite Gold Project. Outside of work, I am an Idahoan, recreationalist, and mother of three young boys who adore getting out to explore Idaho's backcountry and, in those different roles, I am equally supportive of this project as presented in Alternative 2 of the DEIS.

I have been a part of the Midas Gold team for a little over three years. During that time, I have learned a lot about current mining practices, how Midas Gold approaches mining and what the Stibnite Gold Project would mean for Idaho. For me, it is not just an opportunity to bring over 1,000 well-paying jobs and millions of dollars of economic impact to our state (DEIS, 4.21.2.2), it is also the best chance to bring much-needed restoration to an area in desperate need of repair and provide America's only domestically mined source of the critical mineral antimony.

While there are so many benefits to the Stibnite Gold Project, there are a few areas I would like to focus my comments for the purposes of your review.

Climate Change

The historical Stibnite Mining District has a long history and a bright future. In its prime, this historical mining district helped America shorten the war efforts of WWII by at least a year, saving a million Americans lives. While the site was abandoned for many years, now we have an opportunity to develop a project that could help Americans diminish the effects of climate change. Our rapidly growing green technology industry is requiring more and more minerals, including antimony, gold and silver. Domestically sourcing these minerals in the United States not only ensures mining operations meet rigorous regulations, it also reduces the U.S. carbon footprint by reducing the overall number of miles goods must travel. The impacts of continually sourcing minerals from foreign countries adds up.

To have a greener, more sustainable future we need solar panels, wind turbines and electric vehicles. However, to sustain this growing industry, we need critical minerals and we need access to them here at home. If we continue to rely on foreign countries, we will not be able to have any say into the environmental or ethical practices that are used to mine these materials. The United States has some of the most rigorous environmental standards in the world. When we mine here at home, we can do a better job protecting our planet and responsibly sourcing the materials we need for carbon reducing technology.

Scenic Resources

The DEIS correctly concludes that existing disturbances associated with historic mining activities dominate the landscape (DEIS, 4.20.2.5) at site. The plan that Midas Gold has proposed under Alternative 2 uses mining to restore this historical site and repair the legacy issues that are plaguing the area today. Restoring the East Fork South Fork Salmon River is at the core of the project. Our company has designed a world-class restoration project based on maximizing habitat and creating a dynamic river system that closely mimics natural conditions, specifically designed to provide permanent passage for salmon and bull trout, and open up approximately 25 miles of perennial stream habitat, about 6 miles of which are large enough for Chinook

salmon and steelhead. Without the project, the East Fork South Fork Salmon River will continue to flow into an abandoned mining pit, which not only diminishes the current visual value of the site, it will also continue to block salmon to native spawning grounds. Additionally, forest management-related plans, including rehabilitation and reclamation, would result in a positive cumulative effect for the landscape by enhancing the natural, rugged setting that is characteristic of this area (DEIS, 4.20.4.1).

The Stibnite Gold Project is located in a remote section of Valley County. The closest village is 20 miles away. So, while the site is being mined and reclaimed, it will be out of view from Idahoans everyday lives. However, once it is complete, there will be a healthy new ecosystem for Idahoans to enjoy.

Noise

We understand when people get outside many just want to hear sounds of nature. That is why Midas Gold has worked so hard to identify opportunities to reduce noise impacts associated with the Stibnite Gold Project. This includes implementing noise reduction plans that were successfully used during previous drilling programs and committing to work with companies to maintain exhaust muffler systems outlined under EPA noise regulations. Midas Gold has also commissioned noise studies and the results are promising. They found that the average hourly noise from all Stibnite Gold Project-related activities combined, including blasting would attenuate to 0 dBA at Yellow Pine (the closest community to the project) during the operations phase, and would have no effect on background ambient noise levels (DEIS, pg. 4.6-28), and the average hourly noise from all SGP-related activities combined, both without and with blasting, would attenuate to 5dBA at Warm Lake Camp, well below the 55-dBA threshold and background ambient noise levels and would have no effect on existing noise levels (DEIS, pg. 4.6-27). I am confident plans for the Stibnite Gold Project will allow Idahoans to get into the back country and enjoy the natural beauty without noticing sound impacts from mining.

I believe Alternative 2 of the DEIS is the best option moving forward. The project footprint in Alternative 2 is smaller than Alternative 1 and reduces the project's overall impact on the environment. Under Alternative 3, the proposed location of the tailings storage facility would increase surface disturbances at the site and leave the existing spent ore disposal area as it is today, jeopardizing potential ground and surface water benefits. Alternative 4 would delay operations by two years and put mine traffic adjacent to waterways, increasing risks for fish habitat. And, if Alternative 5 is selected we will consciously be making the decision to let the site further deteriorate.

Right now, we have an opportunity to clean up a brownfield site that has sat neglected for years. We have an opportunity to provide family-wage jobs to hundreds of Idahoans. We have an opportunity to reconnect salmon to their native spawning grounds for the first time in over 80 years. And, we have an opportunity to help develop a more environmentally friendly and ethical supply chain of the materials we all depend on. As an employee of Midas Gold, Idahoan, recreationalist and mother, I strongly hope we take advantage of the opportunities in front of us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shelley Bennett". The ink is dark and the signature is written in a fluid, personal style.

Shelley Bennett