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Comments: I am a retired federal employee and resident of McCall during the fall and winter. As a half-time resident, I am keenly interested in the regional environment, economy, and community, and have been following the progress of the proposed Midas Gold Idaho mining project. I have listened to presentations and read articles by project opponents and proponents. I have come to feel strongly that the positives far outweigh potential negatives and that Midas Gold has developed a sound mining plan that will bring significant benefits to our region.

Midas Gold has proved itself to be an extraordinary community partner. Throughout the development of their plans they have made sincere efforts to integrate community suggestions into their project plans where feasible. To an outside eye, it appears that they have worked cooperatively with state and federal regulators. The EIS documents indicate that they are more than adequately addressing environmental concerns and genuinely endeavoring to minimize their environmental impact. Further, the project is adequately bonded for restoration should problems develop or the company become insolvent.

The level of transparency during project development is remarkable. If interested parties have questions remaining about project components, it is because they have not made the effort to learn about them. I have heard residents complain that Midas Gold is [acirc][euro]ohiding[acirc][euro][bull] information when I can point directly to the [acirc][euro]ohidden[acirc][euro][bull] information described in detail on the Midas Gold Website. Because details of plans have been available throughout the project development, I find it frustrating that some stakeholders are asking for a further extension to the EIS comment period. For those truly interested, materials have been available long enough, and a further extension would unnecessarily delay the project with no benefit.

I am very excited that Midas Gold will clean up the mess at the legacy mining site. It is difficult to understand how we can complain about their impact on the area when the environment will be it better than it is now when they leave. If there were any serious efforts to reclaim and restore the site without additional mining, I might feel differently, but there are not nor are there likely to be any for the foreseeable future. In the meantime, the local habitat continues to degrade. I am also quite pleased that the mine will help meet a critical US strategic mineral need by producing antimony. Though it may not be the primary goal of the project, I am content for the company to make a profit on gold/silver operations if they can at the same time help mitigate an important strategic need. Finally, the economic impact on the region cannot be underestimated. The high paying year-round jobs that it will bring be a tremendous economic boon. They may be transient, but a short-term boost i s preferable to the status quo where so much of our economy is reliant on government jobs and seasonal work. And, while the jobs are transient, the infrastructure that the mine will bring will be a permanent positive legacy.

I urge the USFS to permit Midas Gold Idaho[rsquo]s Stibnite Gold Project as outlined in their Modified Plan of Restoration and Operations, (Alternative 2) in the EIS without further delay.