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Organization: Idaho State Senate

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Comments: As a rancher, I understand the importance of both protecting Idaho's land and growing the state's economy. Further I have had an opportunity to tour the Stibnite Gold Project site and why I am reaching out in support of the project.

Decades ago, part of the Salmon River was diverted to allow for excavation of the Yellow Pine pit, which continued for well over a decade. Once those operations were complete, the river was rerouted back to its original route, but now flowed through an abandoned mine pit, making it impossible for salmon to reach their native spawning grounds. Midas has committed to fully restoring this section of the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River once they have completed their project. Backfilling the Yellow Pine pit and permanently removing barriers to fish migration will help local fish populations recover and thrive. The company plans to reconnect fish passage before mining begins with a temporary passageway. Utilizing best practices in design taken from similar systems around the world, this tunnel will allow fish populations to jumpstart their recovery concurrently with the mining operations, rather than waiting until after the fact.

Due to previous mining activity from the World War II era, there are over three million tons of tailings lying unconstrained in Meadow Creek - as well as more than seven million tons of spent ore- which feeds right into the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River. As a result, toxic metals are leaching into the local water supply. Midas Gold has been monitoring the water quality for years and has outlined a number of steps to address these issues. The company plans on removing all 10+ million tons of tailings and rock waste, reprocessing the tailings, and storing both in a way that they will no longer interact with water.

After careful consideration, I urge the U.S. Forest Service to approve Alternative 2 laid out by Midas Gold in its proposal and allow the Stibnite Gold Project to move forward in the permitting process.