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Title:

Comments: Here in Valley County, Idaho, we are blessed with a gorgeous natural environment and bountiful resources, and citizens here know we have to take care of it. But we cannot do it alone, and that is why I am writing to support Midas Gold's "Alternative 2" proposal.

As an avid angler, I am especially pleased with this plan because of its direct attention to the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River. When the Yellow Pine pit was mined in the 1930s, they ended up blocking salmon passage where important spawning habitats were located. The salmon as well as bull trout and steelhead have been cut off, and it is just tragic to look at for those of us who know the story. Thankfully, Midas plans to restore approximately 25 miles of perennial stream and build a 6-mile tunnelway for fish to reach spawning habitat-if the plan is approved.

Furthermore, removing the materials creating the blockage will improve water quality. Midas has been sampling the water for years and have found high arsenic and antimony levels in some areas. In fact, one monitoring well found an arsenic level that was 700 times higher than the drinking water standards. We cannot allow that to continue both for human and wildlife safety. Midas has provided a "Plan of Restoration and Operations" with a detailed strategy to address the majority of the prior contamination.

I can say this for Midas Gold: they have done their homework. As you know, the National Environmental Policy Act creates a thorough and painstakingly detailed process. Midas has been working on this project for over a decade. More importantly, the process has ensured accountability and transparency. They have made all of their people available to us, and that means a lot to me. It seems they have literally left no stone unturned.

The bottom line is, Midas is a responsible company that I believe will be a good partner for our communities, and if nothing else is done, the legacy of neglect will be passed down to yet another generation of Idahoans. Alternative 2 is the best approach in my opinion; a significant improvement over Midas's 2016 plan-and much better than the other proposals that in my view will cause new safety concerns and could delay action for two years (or do nothing at all).