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Title:

Comments: Dear Ms. Jackson,

I am writing this letter in support of the Midas Gold Stibnite Gold Project in Idaho and to urge the U.S. Forest Service to move forward by permitting the project as outlined in alternative 2 in the DEIS of the Modified Plan of Restoration and Operations.

I am a professional mining engineer (Nevada, Arizona) with 40 years of practical mining experience. I have spent most of my career operating or building world class mines that provide safe and good paying jobs for employees, and that support the surrounding communities. I have been awarded the Lawrence Saunders Gold Medal from the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum Engineers, have been inducted into the Academy of Engineers at the University of Idaho, and was the President of the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration in 2016.

In 2004 I was the Vice President and General Manager of the Kensington Gold Mine for Coeur d'Alene Mines (now Coeur Mining) where we successfully permitted a mine in a pristine National Forest through a cooperative (and exhaustive) effort with the USFS. Many things about the DEIS for Stibnite remind me of Kensington. Some similarities include:

- *Good, safe family-supporting jobs, focused on local hire, creating sustainable opportunities for local small businesses

- *Significant investment by our industry that will generate hundreds of millions of dollars of direct and indirect taxes

- *Years of detailed and comprehensive reviews of the plans by local, state and federal agencies culminating in a DEIS that protects and even improves the environment while providing the benefits stated above

Where the Stibnite Project differs from Kensington is the exceptional benefits of providing much needed critical minerals to reduce our country's dependency on unfriendly countries, and the exceptional plan of restoring a vast habitat to a significantly better condition than it is today.

Since 2004 I have been involved with numerous NEPA (or Equator Principle) processes as a mine builder. I believe the DEIS for Midas Gold is one of the most complete and sound documents I have encountered in these 15 years of permitting mines. I specifically would like to complement the USFS and Midas Gold for coming up with a DEIS that has thoughtfully and quite skillfully created an access and infrastructure plan in alternative 2 that protects the land you are the stewards of, and minimizes overall impact. By utilizing previously disturbed areas to a maximum, the project can keep over 40% of the project footprint on these lands. Quite a feat for a project of its size, in a pristine part of Idaho.

As a person that has been responsible for access to sites on public land in the past, I am particularly impressed with the Burntlog route as the best transportation option. This route allows traffic to access the mine while avoiding existing routes that parallel major fish bearing waterways, which will reduce risk of potential spills, minimize sediment delivery to waterways, avoid known winter avalanche sites, and reduce potential conflicts with other drivers and users on South Fork and Johnson Creek Roads. The way in which Midas has worked with McCall to find an alternative that fits within their Comprehensive Plan and also fits with the Idaho Department of Transportation long term objectives speaks volumes to the thoroughness of this DEIS.

By bussing employees to the site, consolidating shipments, restricting traffic to business hours, muffling engine breaks you can see that Midas has put a lot of thought and commitment into serving the community and reducing dust generation, sediment runoff and the production of greenhouse gas emissions from extra vehicles on the road.

Midas Gold listened to stakeholders during this process and heard that maintaining access through the site to Thunder Mountain Road was important for recreationists. As a result, in alternative 2 of the DEIS Midas Gold proposed maintaining access through the site by routing traffic on a road through or near the Yellow Pine pit as allowed by seasonal and operational safety conditions. They also agreed to work with local snowmobiling groups to plow Warm Lake Road between Landmark and the Burntlog Route into Stibnite throughout the winter, and ensure a route exists between Warm Lake and Landmark. Across the board, the way in which Midas Gold has listened to stakeholder concerns and implemented solutions into their proposed plan has been exemplary.

In summary, there are many good reasons to approve this project, including jobs, critical mineral supply, benefits to the community, amongst others. But I would like to leave you with my statement that in 40 years of working at, operating, and building mines, I believe Alternative 2 of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Midas Gold Stibnite Gold Project to be the most thorough, well thought out plan focusing on the community and the environment, that is unlike virtually any other plan I have seen. I strongly support a positive outcome from the DEIS and EIS process, culminating in a positive Record of Decision in the very near future.