Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/15/2020 6:00:00 AM
First name: Jeff
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Organization: Idaho State Senate
Title: Senator, District 32
Comments: As a public servant, it is my responsibility to advocate on behalf of the citizens of Idaho. I write to you in regard to the draft Environmental Impact Statement released by the U.S. Forest Service evaluating Midas Gold Idaho's Stibnite Gold Project, which I believe will not only boost the economy of Idaho, but will drastically improve the quality of life for those who call this beautiful state home.

If approved, the Stibnite Gold Project will be a $1 billion investment in Idaho. Additionally, Midas Gold Idaho plans to hire Idahoans, and work with local vendors whenever possible. Construction alone will generate upward of 1,000 jobs which will pay on average $80,000 per year. This rate is four times higher than the average wages of the hospitality industry that dominate this region of Idaho. Investment and job creation from a single project of this scale would help spur economic growth and benefit the surrounding communities immensely. This is a unique chance for Idahoans to open the doors to new opportunities in an area that desperately needs it.

In addition to the economic benefits, there are numerous environmental positives to consider. Midas Gold Idaho is focused on developing a state-of-the-art mining operation, but has given considerable thought and attention in their plan to the local environment. Midas Gold Idaho will clean up and repair damaged land, leaving a site that has been burdened with a 100 years' worth of environmental degradation better than they found it.

For example, currently the East Fork and South Fork of the Salmon River dump into the abandoned Yellow Pine pit meaning local fish populations have not been able to migrate upstream for more than 80 years. Midas Gold Idaho has detailed plans in their Plan of Restoration and Operations (PRO) to fix existing barriers to fish migration and reestablish the natural fish passage. This will require huge investment and oversight, but the company has prioritized this restoration effort as part of their goal of ensuring industry and the environment can flourish together. It is truly remarkable. The Stibnite Gold Project would be a game changer for our state. I strongly urge the U.S. Forest Service to adopt Alternative 2 and allow this project to move forward without delay, so that Idaho can realize the benefits of this crucial project sooner rather than later.