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Comments: I write to express my opposition to the Salmon River Gold Mine Project. Idaho's South Fork of the Salmon River is the home to incredible wildlife and enjoyed by kayakers, rafters, anglers, hunters and hikers. I strongly oppose the idea of allowing two Canadian companies to operate an open gold mine right in the headwaters of the South Fork, risking irreversible damage to this fragile high-elevation environment.

Their extraction plans will not only damage the river with the release of cyanide, arsenic, mercury, and other heavy metals, but the mine's profits will not even benefit the local community. Instead, most of the money will trickle back into the hands of the Canadian corporations at the expense of our public lands, waterways, and ecosystems.

The mine will also risk the habitat of federally protected and endangered Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout which need clean, clear, and cold water to thrive. These already threatened species of fish need the clean water of the Salmon River to survive. As a Washingtonian, I particularly care about the potential negative impact on Chinook salmon. Our Southern Resident Killer Whales, which are CRITICALLY endangered, rely on Chinook Salmon as their primary food source. The Salmon river is extraordinary, no other Western river of such volume and gradient is so nearly intact.

The development of the mine also blatantly disregards the treaty between the Nez Perce tribe and the U.S. Government. The South Fork of the Salmon River is part of the Nez Perce's territory, and the U.S. Government has sworn to help to preserve that land.

The environmental impact of allowing pit mining again will be catastrophic and irreversible. No precious metals are worth further harming this unique and fragile ecosystem.