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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Ms. Jackson and other representatives for review of this project,

Please confirm receipt of this message and reply to my question. Thank You!

I hope you are enjoying your fall! I have no doubt you are very busy, but please take a moment to read, consider, and take action on this very important request to extend the comment period for the Idaho Stibnite Gold Project Draft EIS from 45 days to 120 days.

I grew up in Idaho, have worked for over a decade in connecting youth and adults with our nation's wild places, and also have an M.S. in International Conservation and Development at University of Montana, where I had the privilege to work with Lis Novak on the development of U.S.F.S. Sustainable Recreation Planning training modules. I very much respect and appreciate the hard work of the U.S.F.S. and its leaders, particularly that which fulfills its mission statement: "To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forest and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations."

It is for this very mission that you and your team must extend the comment period for the Stibnite Gold Project Draft EIS from 45 days to 120 days.

Here are further specific reasons this must be done:

1) First and foremost, with the continuing increase in COVID-19 cases in Valley County and Idaho and the general circumstances and repercussions of COVID nationwide, it is now even more imperative that the Forest Service grant this request for an extension of the comment period to 120 total days. Commenting on a proposed project is the most significant way that the public can communicate with the agency regarding the potential environmental and community impacts and provide vital information so that the agency can make an informed decision. The importance of public comment to the integrity of the NEPA process and agency decision-making cannot be overstated, and in these unprecedented times, it is crucial to ensure that the public's opportunity to engage in the NEPA process is ensured. Further, some residents of rural Idaho who would be impacted by this project have little or no internet access and as the DEIS is only available online and many libraries and other places of internet access are closed due to COVID, these community members need more time to access and review the document.

2) The DEIS for the Stibnite Gold Project contains an enormous amount of information, much of which has not been readily available to the public. It is unreasonable to assume that 45 days is enough time to thoroughly examine and comment on a document thousands of pages long.

3) Further, as a close friend noted who is pregnant, "I'm having the baby! There's no way I can have the baby, get back to work, and adequately review that document." 45 days is simply an unreasonably short amount of time for review in consideration of community members who are expecting children.

4) Similar mining proposals, such as the Pebble Mine DEIS 2019 (120 days), Rosemont Copper Mine DEIS 2011 (90 days), Idaho Cobalt Project 2007 (originally 60 days but was extended to 90 days in response to requests for additional review time), Thompson Creek Mine MMPO DEIS 2014 (modified mine plan of operations 90 days), have had comment periods at least twice as long.

5) There is evidence that Midas Gold Corp. and its subsidiary Midas Gold Idaho, Inc. have been pressuring members of the U.S. House of Representatives, other involved federal agencies, state lawmakers, and the USFS

to approve this project in an expedited manner. Extending the comment period to 120 days will reassure the public that the USFS values the public's input, and is operating for OUR public lands, not for the benefits of special interests. Further, as Midas Gold has hired a company to submit public comments on their behalf, it is more significant to ensure actual people have the time to submit comments for consideration.

Thank you very much for your hard work and for consideration of this necessity of action in extension of the comment period to 120 days. And please notify me by email to answer the following question:

When and how will you notify the public of a decision on a potential extended comment period?

What are the reasons that such a DEIS is being rushed through?

Thank You.

Sincerely,  
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