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First name: Gina

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello, my name is Gina and I am a Registered Nurse and outdoor enthusiast. Being outdoors is what makes me feel whole. As a whitewater kayaker I take seriously the to proposed projects such as Midas and feel it very destructive. I feel connected to the South Fork Salmon for its beauty and wildness, its a place of refuge and recreation that everyone deserves to enjoy. I want to fight to protect this beautiful river and all its surroundings, however I feel that more time is needed to fully feel and read all the comments fighting to help keep this place alive. I have currently been battling breast cancer as well as working in an Emergency Department during COVID which has been all consuming physically and mentally. Having more time to review this is crucial in times such as these. DEIS present an enormous amount of information, thousands of pages of dense information that needs to be reviewed in a short time frame. As we have all felt the impact of 2020 with wildfires, hurricanes, an unbelievable and important election, COVID, and personally myself cancer...we know this has been a very stressful year. Currently all these circumstances lead to people having limited bandwidth due to personal obligations to engage in political processes...we need more time.

There has been Evidence that Midas has been pressuring members of U.S. House of Representatives and other federal agencies and the USFS to approve this project in an expedited manner. Extended comment period is needed as evidence USFS is ensuring the legal process of public input has been accounted for. There is also a lack of accessibility to the public, as the Forest Service has not made printed copies available to the public, excluding those without reliable internet services.

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.

There is also 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.

Thank you for taking the time to read and please stay true and fight for the safety of our public health and land. Its our future and we must protect it!

Gina