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First name: Migel

Last name: Legarreta

Organization: Associated Taxpayers of Idaho

Title: President

Comments: Since 1946, the Associated Taxpayers of Idaho (ATI) has been working for individual and corporate taxpayers in our state to advocate for effective, fiscally responsible government and financial policy solutions. Our members range from private citizens to small businesses to large companies. On behalf of those we represent and all Idahoans, I am writing to encourage your support of the Stibnite Gold Project, which will benefit Idaho's economy, increase our tax base, and drive private investment in our state while strengthening our mining industry in economically and environmentally smart ways.

Our rural communities desperately need the kind of private-sector investment that the Stibnite Gold Project will bring to central Idaho. Even before construction has begun, Midas Gold Idaho-the private company at the reins of this impressive project-has already spent more than \$69 million with Idaho vendors, suppliers, and contractors. This is all part of their ongoing commitment to hiring Idahoans whenever and wherever possible.

Once complete and fully operational, the project will provide anywhere from 500 to 600 direct jobs for local rural communities with payrolls ranging from \$48 to \$51 million annually. Indirectly, the project could support up to an additional 600 jobs, as operations will spur economic activity in local communities, creating a new demand for a range of professions- from teachers in local schools to restaurant, retail, and other hospitality staff. There are also hundreds of temporary jobs that will be created and supported during the construction phase, both directly and indirectly.

While these jobs numbers are impressive, perhaps even more so are the tax revenue implications this project would have for our local and statewide economies. Midas Gold alone would pay roughly \$329 million in federal corporate income taxes and another \$86 million in state corporate income taxes. Moreover, the entire project would cost \$1.1 billion to build and about \$230 million per year to operate, infusing hundreds of millions of dollars into our economy while creating much-needed jobs and boosting local businesses in the process.

It shouldn't come as a surprise that the project is geared toward helping local communities. That has been part of the company's mission from the onset. Early on in the planning stages of the Stibnite Gold Project, Midas made it a point to listen to and involve the eight communities closest to the project site. The company entered into a formal community agreement with these communities, committing to holding regular forums to provide information and address concerns of community members as the project progressed. That agreement led to the establishment of the Stibnite Foundation, an independently run grant organization dedicated to funding local community projects.

Additionally, Midas Gold drafted a Plan of Restoration and Operations (PRO), outlining their plan for restoring the ecosystem surrounding the Stibnite Mining District, which was submitted to the U.S. Forest Service in 2016. Since then, however, due to the company's involvement and communication with local communities, the company has updated and submitted a modified version of the PRO, or Mod PRO. By incorporating the feedback and suggestions from local communities, Midas Gold has shown it is actually listening to the needs of Idahoans and taking steps to improve its plan based on those needs.

Perhaps most importantly, all of these benefits - the investment in our communities, new jobs, business growth, renewed economic activity, and environmental progress - will come at zero cost to Idaho taxpayers. Even aside from everything I've mentioned so far, Midas Gold has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on road maintenance as well community giving.

While previous mining companies simply picked up and walked away when they were through with the land -

leaving taxpayers on the hook for federal clean-up efforts - Midas has made it a point to not only meet but increase their commitment to restoring the land and leaving it in far better condition than they found it. They are a good corporate citizen that is making a sizable private investment in the rural Idaho communities that need it most. We cannot afford to miss out on this opportunity.

Therefore, we ask that the U.S. Forest Service adopt Alternative 2 as laid out in the draft Environmental Impact Statement. Please do everything you can to help support this project and ensure it is approved quickly and efficiently. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.