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Comments: Representing roughly 300 Idaho employers across a diverse range of industries as well as chambers of commerce across the state, the Idaho Association of Commerce & Industry (IACI) works to support effective public policies that support prosperity for both businesses and citizens throughout the state. We write today to strongly urge you to advance the Stibnite Gold Project at the historic Stibnite Mining District. After reviewing the draft Environmental Impact Statement, we urge your agency to adopt Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative to move forward. Not only will this project go a long way in creating jobs and supporting Idaho businesses, but it will do so in a way that protects and restores the local environment by taking an ethical and responsible approach to mining. Midas Gold Idaho has made a commitment to hiring and working with local Idaho vendors and suppliers in the planning, construction, and operations of the project. Even though construction and mining has yet to begin, the company has already spent nearly \$70 million with in-state businesses and contractors. Throughout the life of the project, Midas has indicated it will also work with local schools, community colleges, and the Idaho Department of Labor to provide training opportunities that will give Idahoans the skills they need to enter the mining workforce. Workforce development is a critical priority for the health of our beloved state. During construction alone, the project is likely to support up to 1,500 people developing the site. Once operations are up and running, Midas Gold anticipates it will provide as many as 600 jobs ranging from management and administration to equipment operators and mechanics to geologists and environmental specialists. In addition, another 450 to 600 Idahoans would be supported indirectly during operations. It is important to remember that the regulatory environment surrounding the mining industry has never been stronger. Midas has been transparent throughout the process, working in close collaboration with regulators providing accurate information for surrounding residents, businesses, and communities in a timely manner. Midas has also made a concerted effort to raise the bar when it comes to determining how to ensure the surrounding environment is fully restored and reclaimed after operations are complete—and even while they are underway. In the past, the Stibnite Mining District has been neglected and suffered from environmental degradation. The water quality in the region has been severely compromised for decades, as millions of tons of World War II era tailings and sediment from erosion due to deforestation has settled in the Meadow Creek Valley. Water interacting with the tailings has raised the level of arsenic and other metals to uninhabitable levels while the increased sediments have hurt local fish populations. Idahoans value a high-quality environment, and Midas is committed to providing the resources it will take to finally address these problems with the existing site, including water quality and fish migration. In fact, IACI is so confident that Midas Gold is the right partner to help develop the Stibnite site in an environmentally sustainable way, that we awarded the company our 2015 Environmental Excellence Award recognizing their innovative environmental leadership efforts and accomplishments, including environmental restoration, water quality improvements, and fish habitat enhancements in the Stibnite-Yellow Pine area. Midas Gold has already been working to address these issues. To date, the company has planted more than 60,000 trees to control erosion and reduce the collection of sediments in the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River. They have also removed more than 30 tons of scrap metal and reclaimed more than 30 acres of land. Furthermore, they have crafted a phased approach that prioritizes environmental reclamation, ensuring that restoration will continue in conjunction with responsible mining efforts. They will be improving the land as operations continue, not waiting until they are complete to begin restoration. The Stibnite Gold Project will bring much-needed private investment, employment opportunities, and business growth to central Idaho—all while responsibly developing this historic site and restoring the surrounding environment. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity Idaho cannot afford to miss. We strongly encourage a swift approval of this project so Idaho can begin to reap the economic and environmental benefits this project will bring to our state.