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First name: Rachel

Last name: Spencer

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Ms. Jackson,

I write to express my opposition to the Stibnite Gold Project. I also write to express how deeply I value our pristine natural resource: the South Fork of the Salmon River.

If permitted this project will disturb 3,423 acres of land (75% of which is public land) and miles of the South Fork of the Salmon River. In addition, over 13,000 acres of public land will be inaccessible during the nearly 20 year project lifecycle. To limit access to public land in this way, and to do so in order to direct profit toward private industry, is unacceptable. Limiting access to public land, particularly during a global pandemic in which the outdoors are our only reprieve, is highly disrespectful to citizens in normal conditions, and reprehensible in current times.

The proposed project will harm Endangered Species Act listed Bull Trout and Chinook Salmon by destroying critical spawning and rearing habitat, and will threaten irreplaceable recreational resources downstream of the project site. Why is it deemed remotely acceptable to use open-pit mines and cyanide leaching to extract gold and antimony in the headwaters of one of Idaho's most iconic waterways? I am strongly opposed.

I myself own an outdoor outfitter in Arkansas, but travel often to Idaho to raft the state's wild and scenic waterways - including the Salmon. Preserving our public rivers for public use is critically important and also plays a huge role in the area's economy. When I am a tourist in Idaho, I come for the river - but I also stay at hotel, purchase groceries, gear, fuel, drinks, meals, and more (including some delicious huckleberry milkshakes I still think about)! Local small businesses depend on the river for tourism; the proposed project will compromise those collective livelihoods. Regardless of any savvy communications implying otherwise, the Stibnite Gold Project is a direct threat to the thriving RIVER-BASED tourism economy of independently owned and managed small businesses in Idaho.

Midas Gold's proposed project would destroy over 20% of critical habitat for Chinook and Bull Trout in the project area. Salmon are a key piece of the ecosystem in their namesake river, and deserve protection on their own merit. They also play a key role in the broader web of biodiversity in and surrounding the river. Salmon are of huge import to indigenous peoples in Idaho. I would encourage your office to conduct a thorough, official, and transparent tribal consultation with any impacted or potentially tribes in accordance with Executive Order 13175 to ensure their input is represented into your evaluation of the proposed project before it moves any further.

Ms. Jackson and team - thank you for your review of this letter. I hope upon your full review you deem it appropriate to PREVENT the mine from moving forward and to PROTECT the South Fork of the Salmon River. We must protect this vital natural resource now - and your decision will determine if future generations also have the opportunity to know and love this river.

Thank you for your time and your service.

Sincerely,

Rachel Spencer