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First name: Judy

Last name: Secrist

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have grave concerns about a cyanide vat leaching mining project consisting of 3 open pits spread over 500 acres of land and a tailings deposit on an additional 400 acres. I would like to know if other options were considered. Did the applicant consider underground mining which would be less depreciating to the environment?

I find the report to have areas that are required by NEPA to be address that are incomplete or the information will be provided at a later date. This makes it difficult to fully analyze the effects of this project.

A major concern with this project is the negative effect it will have upon the fish population. Several species of fish that are actually listed as endangered will be greatly impacted due to lethal rising water temperatures and degraded water quality making the habitat unlivable for aquatic organisms. The increased water temperatures have the potential of blocking migration of resident bull trout (an endangered species) and reduce the spawning success of the species. The success of the proposed tunnel is also unknown. Creeks and streams near the site already have high levels of arsenic from past mining, reopening the area to mining would lead to more arsenic, mercury and other heavy metals being released into the watershed. All of these impacts will have an irreversible effect upon fish already listed as endangered.

Research by the U.S. Geological Survey indicates that nearly every gold mine ends up spilling hazardous materials at one time or another. Gold mines almost always pollute ground or surface water. Research about pollution from gold mines indicates there is a very high probability that Midas will at some point spill hazardous materials polluting surface and ground water within the Salmon River Watershed. The Salmon River is one of the defining characteristics of Idaho. People come from around the world to recreate on the river. Much of the Salmon River system is eligible for Wild and Scenic River Designation. A spill or leak would lead to contamination not only locally, but regionally across the state of Idaho. Idaho has a long history with mining. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent within the state cleaning up after abandoned mining projects. Do we want more damage and contaminated sites? Mine companies always promise the moon, but leave the state holding the bag. The potential damage this

mine could cause and the cost to clean it up are beyond my comprehension. How can one possibly guarantee that the state will not be left once again with the financial obligation to restore a large area of contamination? Stibnite is located near the headwater of the South Fork of the Salmon River. If there were to be leak or spill the repercussions would extend to Riggins, Lewiston, and beyond. Downstream communities are dependent upon the Salmon River for their economies. Any degradation of the river would be devastating to those communities. This project will disturb 3,423 acres of land of which 75% is publicly owned and borders of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness in a state which highly prizes its pristine unspoiled areas. Somehow 100 million tons of contaminated tailings stored behind a 450 foot dam just doesn't seem compatible. Because mining is still being regulated by the outdated 1872 Mining Act, the minerals extracted will be virtually given away to a foreign company. I do not think the people of Idaho or even of the entire U.S. would think this project is worth the risks and degradation that accompany it.