

MINUTES
HOUSE RESOURCES & CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, January 25, 2018

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW40

MEMBERS: Chairman Gibbs, Vice Chairman Gestrin, Representatives Moyle, Raybould, Shepherd, Wood, Boyle, Vander Woude, Miller, Burtenshaw, Mendive, Youngblood, Kauffman, Giddings, Blanksma, Erpelding, Rubel, Jordan (Wolf)

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Shepherd

GUESTS: Sharon Kiefer, Idaho Department of Fish and Game; Russell Westerberg, Pacificorp; Roger Seiger, Capitol West; Dennis Stevenson, Department of Administration; Elizabeth Criner, JR Simplot Company; Daniel Luker, Idaho Trial Lawyers Association; Ben Davenport, Idaho Mining Association; Tom Schultz and Steve Thomas, Idaho Forest Group

Chairman Gibbs called the meeting to order at 1:30pm.

MOTION: **Rep. Kauffman** made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2018 meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Mckinsey Lyon, Director, Public Affairs, Midas Gold Idaho, gave a presentation on the Stibnite Gold Project, located in Valley County, Idaho. She stated this historic mining district has seen mining activity for over 100 years, and in 2009, Midas Gold consolidated the land package within this historic mining district and began evaluating the site. Ms. Lyon noted in the early days of mining there were little to no environmental regulations during mining operations as well as regulations on how to leave the land when the operations were done. As a result of the legacy left behind, the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River continues to flow directly into the Yellow Pine Pit, blocking any fish migration, the 10.5 million tons of spent ore and tailings sitting in the valley in an unlined pit creates a potential source of water degradation, and a massive source of sedimentation known as Blowout Creek continues to degrade fish habitat in a very sensitive area. Midas Gold is taking responsibility to restore the environment in this historic mining district by cleaning up the legacies of the past and developing a modern mining industry.

Ms. Lyon stated once approved, Midas Gold will invest approximately \$1 billion in Idaho over the course of the Stibnite project, providing well paying jobs to Idahoans and helping to grow the local economy during operations. Since 2009, Midas Gold has invested a total of \$145 million, with a portion of that total invested in Idaho businesses and community support programs. They estimate they can produce about 4 million ounces of gold and about 100 million pounds of antimony over the life of the mine, which will provide the economics needed to restore the environment. Restoration includes reprocessing historic tailings, restoring fish passage, repairing historically impacted waterways, remediating areas contributing to water degradation, and rehabilitating habitat and natural vegetation. She stated they are about halfway through with the permitting process and applauds the Forest Service and Idaho Department of Lands, their federal and state partners, for their hard work in helping to coordinate with all of the necessary agencies and streamlining the process.

RS 25842: **Rep. Gestrin**, District 8, stated this Concurrent Resolution is to reject **Subsection 02 of Section 421** of the pending rule found in **Docket No. 13-0108-1706** from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game regarding the mandatory reporting of taking of big game. The Senate concurred.

MOTION: **Rep. Boyle** made a motion to introduce **RS 25842. Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 369: **Sam Eaton**, Legal Counsel, Office of the Governor, stated this bill will codify the existing Idaho Roadless Rule Implementation Commission, which has been operating pursuant to **Executive Order 2014-5** for the last decade. **Chapter 8, Title 67, Idaho Code**, will be amended adding new **Section 67-826 Idaho Roadless Rule Implementation Commission**. Mr. Eaton explained roadless areas are all within National Forests, are undeveloped parcels of land over 5,000 acres, and are high quality lands that possess certain characteristics such as watersheds, scenic views, clean air, and clean water. Idaho has 9.3 million acres of roadless areas inventoried.

In providing background to this Roadless Rule, **Mr. Eaton** stated in 2001, the Roadless Rule was established as a "one size fits all" approach applied to all National Forests in the contiguous 48 states and Alaska, and was very restrictive treating all roadless forest lands the same. In 2006, former **Governor Risch** submitted a petition for a state-specific alternative to the 2001 Rule. The Idaho Roadless Rule was developed and codified under **36 CFR 294**. Lessening some of the restrictions from the 2001 Rule, the Idaho Roadless Rule takes all inventoried roadless lands and designates them into themes; passive restrictive on one end and less restrictive, or active management on the other end. This method of management creates a spectrum of roadless areas with varying levels of management depending on the location of these lands and activities proposed. The Roadless Commission meets with the various Forest Service personnel twice a year to review forest land management proposals to ensure they meet the intent of the Rule.

In response to a question from the committee, **Mr. Eaton** stated the 9.3 million acre figure is the result of areas that were inventoried many years ago. Every time there is a Forest Management Plan Revision, the inventory is updated and modified as needed.

Steve Thomas, representing Idaho Forest Group, stated they are **in support** of this bill.

MOTION: **Rep. Wood** made a motion to send **H 369** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Giddings** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 356: **Sharon Kiefer**, Deputy Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, stated she intended to present this bill to the committee today but just before the meeting started some concerns were brought to her attention that she agreed needed to be addressed. Therefore, Ms. Kiefer requested the committee take no action on this bill today so that she may draft a new RS to bring back before the committee next week.

MOTION: **Rep. Gestrin** made a motion to **HOLD H 356** in committee. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:09pm.

Representative Gibbs
Chair

Tracey McDonnell
Secretary