

MINUTES
HOUSE RESOURCES & CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Tuesday, January 29, 2019
- TIME:** 1:30 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room EW40
- MEMBERS:** Chairman Gibbs, Vice Chairman Gestrin, Representative(s) Moyle, Shepherd, Wood, Boyle, Vander Woude, Mendive, Kauffman, Blanksma, Addis, Lickley, Moon, Raybould, Erpelding, Rubel, Mason, Toone
- ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Moyle
- GUESTS:** Sharon Kiefer and Paul Kline, Idaho Department of Fish and Game; Lynn Tominaga, Idaho Ground Water Association; Tim Luke, Idaho Department of Water Resources; Paul Arrington and Morgan Howard, Idaho Water Users Association; John Williams, BPA; John Chatburn, Office of Energy and Mineral Resources; Rialin Flores and Ryan McGoldrick, Conservation Voters for Idaho; Jonathan Oppenheimer, Idaho Conservation League; Mckinsey Lyon, Midas Gold Idaho; Andy Brunelle, USDA Forest Service
- Chairman Gibbs** called the meeting to order at 1:30pm.
- MOTION:** **Rep. Kauffman** made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 17 and January 21, 2019 meetings. **Motion carried by voice vote.**
- RS 26595:** **Rep. Gestrin**, District 8, stated this proposed legislation would provide the Director of the Department of Water Resources more flexibility to exempt new low temperature geothermal wells if certain conditions are met. He stated currently if the bottom of the hole temperature is 85 degrees, that puts the well into the geothermal category and it must immediately be sealed and closed off. This proposed legislation has a provision which would allow the well to remain open as long as the proposed use will not reduce the temperature or pressure of the surrounding geothermal layer.
- MOTION:** **Rep. Raybould** made a motion to introduce **RS 26595**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**
- RS 26635:** **Rep. Gestrin**, District 8, stated this Concurrent Resolution is to reject **Docket No. 13-0110-1801** from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, in its entirety. The Senate Resources and Environment Committee concurred.
- MOTION:** **Rep. Wood** made a motion to introduce **RS 26635** and recommend it be sent directly to the Second Reading Calendar. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Gestrin** will sponsor the bill on the floor.
- Chairman Gibbs** turned the gavel over to **Vice Chairman Gestrin**.

Mckinsey Lyon, Vice President of Public Affairs, Midas Gold Idaho, gave an update on the status of the Stibnite Gold Project. She stated the proposed Stibnite Gold Project's plan is to take an abandoned mining district and use a sustainable approach to partner economic development with environmental restoration. She explained because the original mining at Stibnite occurred during a time of little or no environmental regulations, there are significant historical legacies including over 10 million tons of tailings and waste rock in unprotected water sources, the site contains the largest source of sedimentation in a watershed from an old blown out hydroelectric dam, and a mine pit that blocks fish migration. She stated Midas Gold Idaho built the design for this project based on conditions they wanted to see at closure. Those conditions include sustainable ecosystems, clean up of the legacy impacts from the early mine life, positive social benefits, enhanced fish habitat, and a limited footprint. The Stibnite Gold Project plans include mining the tailings piles for gold, since the focus of earlier operations was strictly for tungsten. Midas Gold anticipates there is over 4 million ounces of high grade gold within the tailings piles and should be enough to pay for the cleanup. They also anticipate production of approximately 100 million pounds of antimony, which is a critical mineral controlled primarily in China. Ms. Lyon concluded by stating the Forest Service is currently in the NEPA process, and anticipates releasing the draft EIS in August 2019. They anticipate a Record of Decision on the EIS within the first quarter of 2020.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 1:55pm.

Representative Gibbs
Chair

Tracey McDonnell
Secretary